anxa
84-5
32086

HELIN ILLUSTRATED GUIDES
THE BATTLEFIELDS (1914-1918)

SOISSONS

BEFORE AND DURING THE WAR

MICHELIN & Cie — CLERMONT-FERRAND
MICHELIN TYRE Co Ltd — 81, Fulham Road, LONDON, S. W.
MICHELIN TIRE Co — MILLTOWN, N. J., U. S. A.

Hotels and Motor-Agents
at SOISSONS

Information extracted from the MICHELIN GUIDE (1919) *

Key to Arbitrary Signs

🏨🏨 Comfortable hotels, with modern, or modernised installation.
🏨 Well-managed hotels.
[CC] Central Heating
[L] Electric Light.
[B] Bath-room.
[WC] Modern W. C's.
Ⓣ 1-09 Telephone Number.
Shed [30] / Shelter [20] — Accommodation for automobiles, and the number of cars which can be put up.

COMPRESSED AIR — Depôt for "bouteilles d'air Michelin" for inflation of tyres.
Repair shop.
Agt Manufacturer's agent.
[20] Garage and number of cars it will hold.
[U] Inspection pit.
[E] Petrol (gasoline) can be obtained here.
[E"] Accumulators can be recharged here.

HOTELS

🏨🏨 **de la Croix d'Or**, *25-27, rue Saint-Christophe*, [CC] [L] [B] [WC] Shelter [20] [U] Ⓣ 1-09.

🏨 **du Lion Rouge**, *1, rue de la Gare* and *2, rue des Charlins (near place de la République)*, [CC] [L] [B] [WC] Shed [30] [U].

MOTOR-AGENTS

STOCK MICHELIN (*COMPRESSED AIR*) **Auto-Garage Soissonnais (L. Renée)**, *11, rue des Feuillants. Agt for :* de Dion, Renault, Philos, [20] [U] [E] Ⓣ 70.

— STOCK MICHELIN (*COMPRESSED AIR*) **Papot**, *96, boulevard Jeanne-d'Arc. Agt for :* Peugeot, Berliet, Brasier. [10] [U] [E] [E"] Ⓣ 4-14.

— **Ch. L. Beck**, Engineer (**Garage Moderne**), *55, avenue de la Gare*. [80] [U] [E] [E"].

— **Faivre**, *7, rue du Collège* and *8, rue du Général-Pille. Agt for :* Peugeot, [25] [E] [E"].

* *The above information dates from March 1st. 1919, and may no longer be exact when it meets the reader's eye. Tourists are therefore recommended to consult the latest edition of the "Michelin Guide to France" (English or French), before setting out on the tour described in this volume.*

THE MICHELIN TOURING OFFICES at: *99, Boulevard Pereire, PARIS* and *81, Fulham Road, Chelsea, LONDON, S.W.3.*, will be pleased to furnish motorists with advice and information, free of charge.
= Special itineraries free, on request. =

You don't know
what a
Good Road Map
is, if you haven't used the
Michelin Map

SCALE : 1 : 200.000
(3.15 miles to the inch).

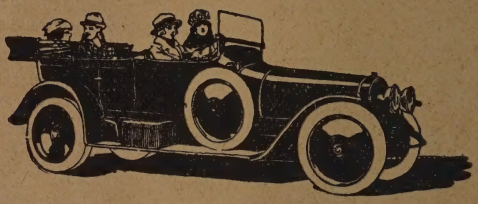
On sale at Michelin stockists and booksellers.

THE tourist finds his way about easily **in town,** if he has a plan giving the names of the streets.

He gets about with the same ease and certainty **on the road,** if he has a **Michelin map,** because it gives all the road numbers on the milestones and road-signs.

The "Michelin Wheel"

BEST of all detachable wheels
because the least complicated



Elegant

It embellishes even the finest coachwork.

Simple

It is detachable at the hub and fixed by six bolts only.

Strong

The only wheel which held out on all fronts during the War.

Practical

Can be replaced in 3 minutes by **anybody** and cleaned still quicker.

It prolongs the life of tyres by cooling them.

AND THE CHEAPEST

IN MEMORY

OF THE MICHELIN WORKMEN AND EMPLOYEES

WHO DIED GLORIOUSLY FOR THEIR COUNTRY

SOISSONS

BEFORE AND DURING THE WAR

PUBLISHED BY
MICHELIN & Cie, CLERMONT-FERRAND (France).

Copyright 1919 by Michelin & Cie.

All rights of translation, adaptation or reproduction (in part or whole) reserved in all countries.

SOISSONS

ORIGIN AND CHIEF HISTORICAL EVENTS

Soissons derives its name from the *Suessiones*, a Belgian tribe who inhabited that part of the country during the Gallic period. At that time the City, then known as *Noviodunum*, was situated about two and a half miles north-west of the Aisne on the Pommiers Plateau. After Cæsar's conquest of the country, the city was rebuilt on the banks of the Aisne, under the name of *Augusta Suessionum*. Of the Gallo-Roman epoch, only a small portion of the city ramparts (*p.* 32) remains, but excavations have brought to light the site of a large theatre (*p.* 51), and at the Mail, the foundations of what were luxurious villas. The greater part of the objects unearthed are in the Museum (*p.* 41), with the exception of the famous group « Le Niobide et son Pédagogue », now in the Louvre.

Christianity was first preached in Soissons at the end of the 3rd century, by two shoemakers, the brothers Crispin and Crispinian, who suffered martyrdom there.

Soissons played an important part throughout the whole of the Frankish Monarchy. It was at its gates that in 486, Clovis won a decisive victory over the last Roman Count, *Syagrius*, thus causing the downfall of Roman domination in Gaul. It was after this victory that the famous episode of the Soissons Vase occurred.

The Frankish King lived for a long time in the city, and at his death in 511, Soissons became the capital of the kingdom of one of his sons, *Clotaire I*, who ultimately became sole king of the Franks. Later, Soissons once more became a separate kingdom under *Chilperic*, and again under *Clotaire II* (561-613). During this period, the rivalry of *Brunehaut* and *Frédégonde* gave rise to sanguinary episodes in Soissons and the surrounding country.

In the 8th century, Soissons witnessed the fall of the Merovingian dynasty. In 752, *Pépin-le-Bref* was proclaimed King by an assembly of nobles in the monastery of Saint-Médard (*p.* 61).

In the same abbey, in 833, the emperor *Louis-le-Débonnaire*, was deposed and imprisoned by his rebel sons, after they had forced him to make a public confession in the church of the monastery.

In 923, under the walls of Soissons, *Charles-le-Simple* fought a battle with his rival *Robert*, Duke of the Franks. In this battle, Charles was taken prisoner and lost his throne, which passed to the powerful House of France, whence sprang the Capetian dynasty.

Throughout the Middle-Ages, religious life was intensely active at Soissons. At that time, the City comprised six large monasteries, in addition to the Cathedral and several churches or collegiates. It was none the less a lay fief with the rank of county, which in 1131 obtained a communal charter under *Louis-le-Gros*, and on the accession of *Francis I*, became definitely part of the crown lands.

Situated on the main roads of invasion, Soissons has always been one of the advance posts which protect Paris. For this reason, it has suffered numerous sieges, most of them disastrous, owing to the unfavourable situation of the city, which lies in a plain surrounded by hills. It was taken and pillaged in 1414 by the troops of *Charles VI*, in 1544 by *Charles-Quint*, and in 1567 by the Protestants. In 1814, during the French campaign, it was conquered by the Russians and Prussians, whilst in 1815, after Waterloo, it had to re-open its gates to the Allies.

In 1870, a German Army of 20 000 men laid siege to Soissons on September 11. The garrison of 5 000 soldiers which held the town

refused to surrender, and attempted several unsuccessful sorties. Posted on the surrounding heights, the German artillery violently bombarded the town, setting fire to some of the suburbs, the hospital, and part of the military commissariat established in the old Abbey of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes. A breach was finally made in the fortifications, and on October 16, after a siege of thirty-seven days, the city was forced to surrender.

During the late war, Soissons was twice occupied by the Germans : in 1914, from September 2 to 13, and in 1918, from May 29 to August 2, after the surprise attack at the Chemin-des-Dames (*See pp.* 4 & 7).

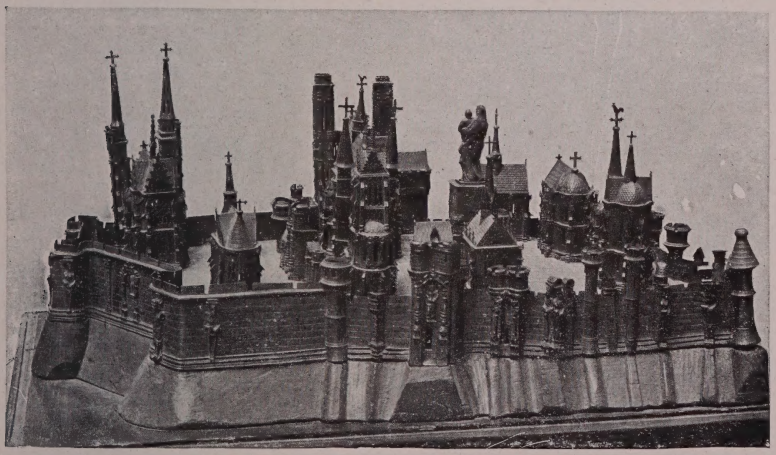
DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY

Soissons, sub-prefecture of the Aisne, was formerly fortified, but was dismantled after the Franco-German war of 1870. Before the late War, its population numbered 14 458.

The city proper remained confined within the narrow limits of its ancient walls. It is bounded on the east by the River Aisne, on the south by the small stream *Crise*, on the west by the Boulevard Jeanne d'Arc which follows the line of the old ramparts, and on the north by the rue Saint-Léger, near which may be seen (close to the tennis court) part of the remains of the old fortifications (*See plan, p.* 12).

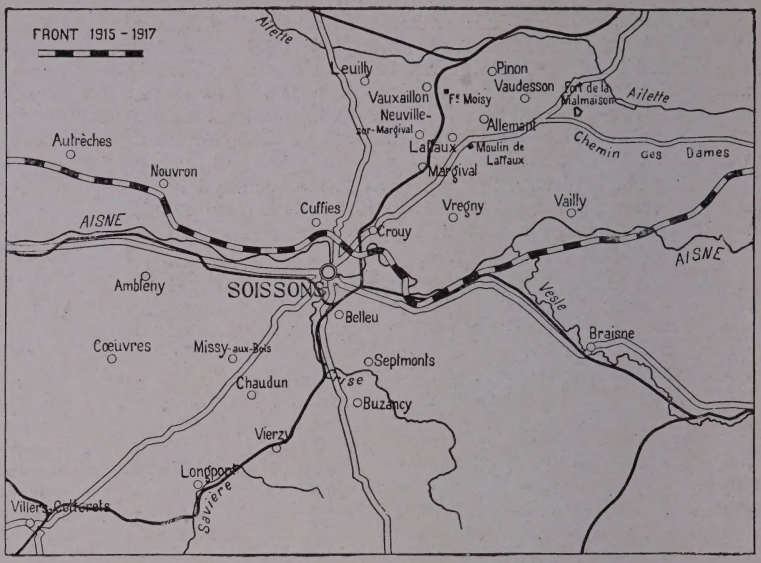
Beyond, lie the *faubourgs :* to the west and south, the modern faubourgs of Saint-Christophe, Crise, and Rheims ; to the east, on the right bank of the Aisne, the old faubourgs : Saint-Waast (named after the Bishop who converted Clovis to Christianity), and Saint-Médard (after the Bishop who was buried there during the Merovingian epoch).

Before the War, Soissons was an important provision centre for Paris (corn and haricot beans). In its suburbs were numerous industrial concerns : boiler manufactories, mechanical workshops and various factories, distilleries, sugar-refineries, etc...



SOISSONS IN THE 16TH CENTURY.

Model (1560) *kept in the Cathedral. Inside the battlemented walls, six collegiates or abbeys were grouped around the Cathedral*



Twice occupied by the Germans (1914 & 1918), *Soissons was two and a half years in the front line*

THE GERMAN OCCUPATION IN 1914

After the battle of Charleroi, despite the vigorous and determined counter-offensive launched from Guise to Saint-Quentin on August 29-30, the Franco-British Armies continued their retreat southwards.

During the evening of August 31, the Valabrègue group of reserve divisions holding the Vauxaillon-Laffaux-Vaudesson sector, and acting as flank-guard to the French 5th Army, remained as a covering force to the north-east of Soissons. It was not, however, intended to defend the town, and the only object in resisting the enemy at this point was to cover the French retirement and ensure the safe passage of the Aisne. Soissons thus became momentarily of primary importance. Large detachments of enemy cavalry wedged themselves between the British and French Armies, and advancing from Noyon towards Soissons, became a formidable menace to the French retirement across the Aisne.

During the night of August 31, a cavalry division was ordered to proceed with all despatch from Craonne to Soissons. Next morning a portion of this division took up a position north of the town, in the neighbourhood of Cuffies, with orders to hold it so long as the reserve divisions east of the town had not crossed the Aisne. The remainder halted on the Belleu Hills, with a view to guarding the river on either side of the town. At about 10 a. m., the enemy came within sight of Soissons and was brought to a standstill for two hours by French cavalry and cyclist scouts. Early in the afternoon, the rearguard of the holding force being informed that the French army had succeeded in crossing the Aisne, retired in an orderly manner towards Septmonts and Buzancy.

On September 2, the Germans occupied the town, but though they levied heavy requisitions, did not commit any act of pillage or vandalism.

DEAD HORSES BELONGING TO UHLANS, IN THE PLACE DE L'HOTEL-DE-VILLE IN 1914.

THE GERMAN EVACUATION

After the victory of the Marne, the French 6th Army on the Ourcq, keeping touch with the British on the right, advanced towards the Aisne. On September 11, the townspeople showed signs of uneasiness. The 45th Division, which formed the right wing of General Maunoury's Army, was marching up the Ourcq and Savière valleys against Soissons, having crushed the enemy's attempted resistance at Chaudun.

On the following day, African troops, assisted by the fire of British artillery stationed at Buzancy, entered the town. As the bridges had been blown up by the retreating enemy, the night had to be spent in the construction of foot-bridges, the work being carried out under fire from the German heavy artillery.

On September 13, the Zouaves and Tirailleurs, under the command of General Quiquandon, attacked Hill 132, which dominates Soissons on the immediate north, but were unable to eject the strong enemy detachments there. Repeated attacks on September 14, 17, 23 and 30 were not more fortunate. The Germans could not be dislodged from these hills which, on account of their many deep quarries and horizontal shafts, formed natural fortresses, and gave them a vantage ground for the indiscriminate bombardment of Soissons.

These bombardments will be dealt with further on. They aimed almost exclusively at the destruction of the town, and as they served no military purpose, they need not be included in this account of the military operations.

FRENCH EFFORTS TO FREE SOISSONS

The destructive bombardment of the town continuing, the French High Command decided, at the beginning of January 1915, to make another attempt to free Soissons.

On January 8, a battalion of Chasseurs and one of Moroccan Sharpshooters, supported by men of the 55th Division, attacked and succeeded in gaining the top of the north-east hill, thus obtaining a footing on Spur 132 (*see map., p.* 53).

On the 12th, the Germans attacked violently in front of Crouy and Hill 132, at a time when the Aisne floods had carried away the foot-bridges, and threatened to cut the French communications, which at the time depended solely on the Saint-Waast bridge.

After a fierce struggle which lasted till nightfall, the French lost the line, along the hills north of the town. A division of the 7th

Corps was thrown into the battle, and by a brilliant attack recaptured part of ridge 132. However, as the communications with the left bank of the Aisne were becoming more and more precarious, it received orders to cover the general retreat decreed by General Maunoury. On the night of the 13th, the French retired across the Aisne leaving only one strongly fortified bridge-head between the distillery and Saint-Paul on the northern bank (*see pp.* 56 & 61).

From the 14th onwards, the Germans commenced attacking the bridge-head in massed formation. They succeeded for a moment in getting into the little hamlet of Saint-Paul, about a mile from the first houses of Soissons, but they were driven out on the same day. On the 16th, enemy bombardment compelled a fresh party of the townspeople to leave their homes. After further fruitless endeavours the Germans abandoned their attacks, and the relative calm of trench warfare set in again in this sector.

LIBERATION OF SOISSONS IN 1917

Until March 1917, the opposing lines underwent no further important modifications. Here and there, however, their defences had been considerably strengthened by redoubts, concrete machine-gun emplacements and very formidable barbed-wire entanglements.

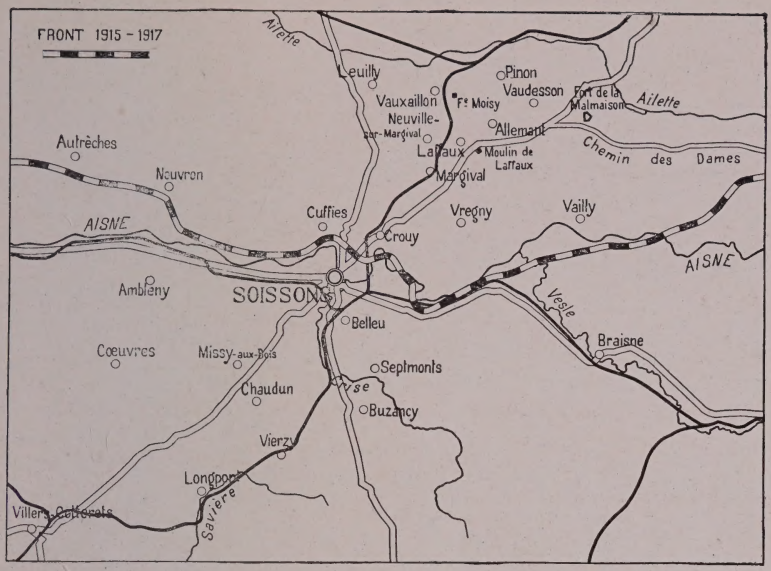
The second itinerary (pp. 52-64) *will enable those interested to inspect parts of these lines, which form a rough semi-circle around Soissons and are quite close to the city.*

The German retirement in March 1917 along both banks of the Oise, covered only a very small extent of ground in the neighbourhood of Soissons, which formed the pivot of the manœuvre.

The new front was less than five miles behind the old one and, though the town remained within easy range of the German heavy artillery, bombardment was less frequent than before.

From March 17, the Germans abandoned their trenches at Crouy and on Hill 132, but tried to stem the French forward push. They launched violent counter-attacks between Vregny and Margival, and the French advanced only step by step to the first trenches of the redoubtable Hindenburg line. By the end of the month, they had scarcely advanced beyond Neuville-sur-Margival and Leuilly. On April 1, they attacked along the line of the Ailette-Laon road, and reached the outskirts of Laffaux and Vauxaillon. The French occupied this last village and Vauxeny during the following days, but their advance went no further.

On April 16, the 6th Army under General Mangin attacked in conjunction with the 5th Army on the east. This offensive was only partly successful. To the north-east of Soissons, where the first Colonial Corps was in action, the French made but little progress, and failed to take the Moisy Farm Plateau. Laffaux was alternately taken and lost, and was only definitely occupied on the 19th. At dawn on May 5, a new offensive was started along the whole front south-east of Vauxaillon Moisy Farm and Laffaux Mill were taken by the French Colonials and Cuirassiers on foot, and held despite numerous fierce counter-attacks. The next day, they advanced yet further north of the mill. The Germans, who could not resign themselves to the loss of these key positions, made repeated endeavours to retake them, and the Soissons sector became "a new Verdun." On October 23, 1917, General Maistre ordered a vigorous offensive, and while the 38th division (General de Salins) captured the Malmaison fort, the 21st Corps (General Degoutte) captured with a single rush



the villages of Allemant and Vaudesson. On the 25th, the French occupied the village and forest of Pinon and reached the line of the canal between the Oise and the Aisne. Soissons was now quite cleared.

THE GERMAN OCCUPATION IN 1918

In 1918, Soissons had again to face the horrors of invasion. On May 27 1918, after the failure of the two German offensives against Paris and Amiens, the Crown Prince threw his divisions forward in a formidable attack along the Aisne Front. The Germans, taking full advantage of the surprise which gave them an absolute numerical superiority, crossed the Chemin-des-Dames in the early hours of the morning. Then, while east of Soissons they were crossing the Aisne in the direction of Vailly and advancing along the left bank of the river as far as the Vesle, they made progress to the north-east in the direction of the undulating plains which sheltered the town.

On the 28th, despite the bitter resistance of the few French units in this sector, they succeeded in getting a footing in the plains of Vregny and Crouy, and crept along the southern bank of the Aisne to the very gates of Soissons, the east and south-east suburbs of which this converging movement enabled them to attain.

The next day, May 29, they captured the suburbs of Saint-Waast and Saint-Médard on the right bank. Then a party of Brandeburg sappers, advancing in front of the attacking force, captured the bridges, and prevented the French from destroying them. About noon, the Germans entered the town, and after street-fighting which lasted several hours, drove back the French into the western suburbs. The French however, still held Pasly Hill to the north-east of Soissons. Throughout the night, French artillery bombarded the approaches of the town and all the places where the Aisne could be crossed, while enfilading fire from

the machine-guns prevented the German soldiers from using the streets. Not until nine o'clock on the morning of the 30th did the enemy capture Pasly Hill and thus secure entire possession of Soissons.

For two days the French clung desperately to the western approaches of the town, but to the south, the Germans established themselves in the angle formed by the Aisne and the Crise, and succeeded in capturing Vierzy and Chaudun. The French positions were thus taken in the rear, and had to be abandoned, step by step, after stubborn fighting.

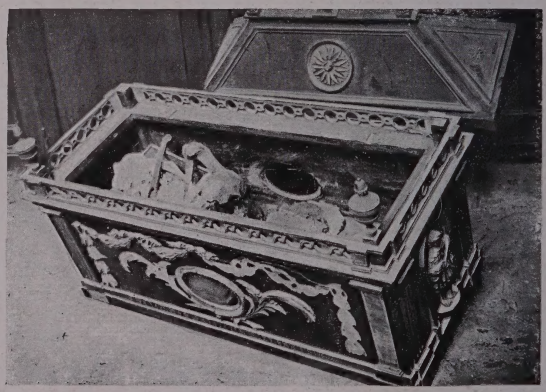
The arrival of reinforcements at the beginning of June, enabled the French definitely to check the enemy, who by this time was exhausted. Though the Germans launched many violent attacks west of Soissons, they were unable to advance beyond the Amblény-Longpont line, six or seven miles from the town, which left the Allies free possession of the Paris road through Villers-Cotterets Wood.

During the second period of occupation, which lasted from May 29 till August 2, the Germans systematically pillaged the city. Every house was emptied of its contents. Before being despatched to Germany, the plunder was centralized in certain places indicated by signs bearing the words "Zur Beutesammelstelle" (to the booty-collecting-centre), with an arrow (*photo opposite*).

GERMAN PILLAGING (*see text opposite*).

Objects which, by reason of their weight or bulk, could not be transported, were destroyed or spoilt

From July 18 onwards, General Mangin successfully attacked the right flank of the German Army, with the result that on August 2, Soissons was once more in French hands. At 6 p. m. on that day, French Chasseurs under General Vuillemot crossed the burning town and reached the Aisne bridges, beyond which, in the Saint-Waast suburb, the enemy rear-guard made a last stand (*photo p. 9*). One of the pivots of the wedge driven between the Marne and the Aisne by the German Armies, had given way, and the enemy was soon forced to retire as far as the Vesle.



Sarcophagus in the Cathedral broken open by the Germans.

FRENCH REPLY TO GERMAN PILLAGING.
The first French soldiers to enter Soissons on August 2, 1918, *« pillaged » a German kitchen-garden, in which a notice signed by the Kommandantur prohibited the entry of troops other than the* 3*rd. Co. of the* 43*rd regt. of Field Artillery.*

The offensive was stayed for a moment in front of the strong hill positions on the north bank of the Aisne, where the Germans had entrenched themselves. An intense bombardment then completed the city's ruin. The French advance began again at the end of August. On the 30th and 31st, Cuffies and Crouy were retaken while on the following days the battle continued furiously on the heights north and east of Soissons. General Mangin's Army succeeded in advancing as far as the plains of Vauxaillon, Laffaux and Vregny, whence it soon dislodged the enemy.

THE ENEMY'S LAST EFFORTS AT RESISTANCE.
German barricade at the exit of the Pont des Anglais in the faubourg Saint-Waast, August 1918

**

THE BOMBARDMENTS OF SOISSONS

As soon as they were driven out of Soissons in September 1914, the enemy proceeded to bombard the city. During the latter part of September, the cannonade was incessant, the fire being directed successively on all the different quarters and public buildings, including the hospital filled with wounded.

MASS IN THE CATHEDRAL 1917.

After a short lull, the bombardment continued with great violence throughout January 1915.

On January 8, the Palais de Justice was set on fire, and on the 9th, the Cathedral was struck by 42 shells. On January 14, the shelling lasted all day, and until the end of February, the firing continued with the same intensity and almost without pause. The Cathedral was systematically aimed at, as is proved by the note-book belonging to the Kommandant of the "Ringkanonenbatterie" posted north-east of Soissons on Hill 132, which fell into the Allies' hands.

On January 31, he wrote: "The battery fired nineteen rounds of percussion and fuze shells at the Cathedral. The tower and nave were hit several times, and the beginning of a fire was noticed in the nave. So far, we have not been able to do much damage to the tower..." On February 2, a battery fired twenty-nine rounds of shrapnel at the Cathedral, and in particular at the tower, sixteen of which hit the mark. On February 25, twenty-one shells were fired at the same target. As for the town itself, another 200 rounds were fired into it on February 28. The bombardment slackened later, but began again at intervals, without any apparent reason and with varying intensity. It was continued until the middle of March 1917, when the German withdrawal from the Somme to the Aisne freed Soissons, whichcould now only be reached by the long-range guns. However aeroplanes frequently dropped incendiary bombs on the city.

IN THE CENTRE OF THE TOWN.

TRENCH IN THE BOULEVARD JEANNE-D'ARC

LIFE IN SOISSONS FROM 1914 TO 1917

A thirty-months' Siege.

From September 1914 to March 1917, while the Germans remained at the gates of the city, the latter was veritably besieged. Notwithstanding the increasing destruction caused by the shells, the civil population continued bravely to "carry on". Part of the population refused to leave the city, while here and there, on the walls that were left standing, printed notices announced the fact that the house was still occupied. Then followed the names of the courageous inmates. During the bombardments, the people took shelter in the cellars, only to resume their ordinary daily occupations as soon as the firing ceased. The public services continued to work normally. Many shops were kept open, and an hotel was available for the travellers who arrived by the night omnibus that linked up the city with Vierzy, the nearest point on the railway.

In parts of the city, it was only possible to get about by making use of the communication trenches which ran along the side of the roads. One such trench ran the whole length of the Boulevard Jeanne d'Arc (*photo above*), while others crossed the Town-Hall gardens (*See p. 40*) and the streets near the Aisne.

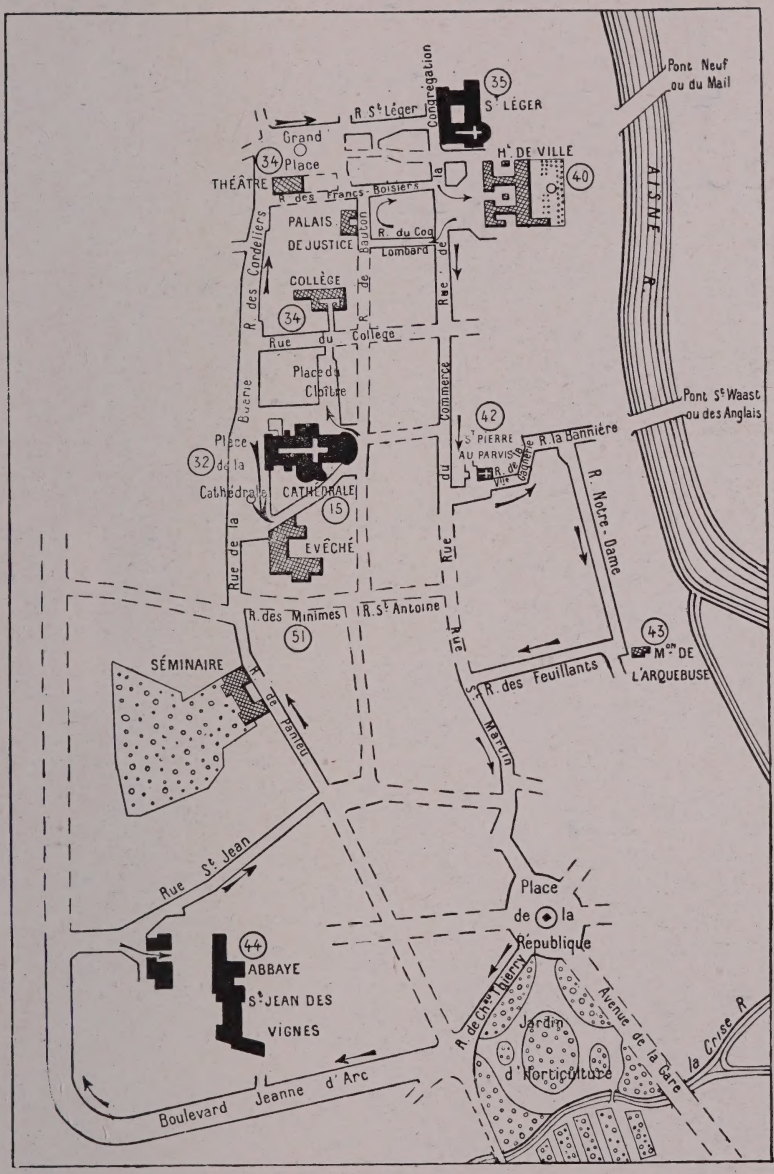
Moreover, getting about was restricted to certain quarters of the city as, just beyond the centre, the defensive works (barricades, trenches, etc.) began.

These works are described in the second Itinerary (p. 52-64) which takes the tourist from the centre of the town to the first-line trenches of the 1915-1917 front (Vauxrot, Saint-Paul and Saint-Médard), via the Mail, Saint Waast suburb, etc.

THE OLD FIRST FRENCH LINE. *The Distillery see p. 56.*

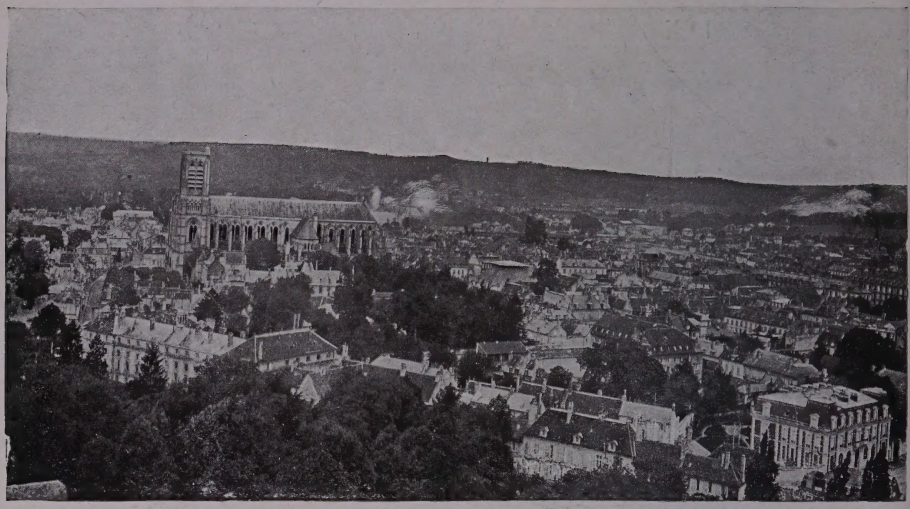
SOISSONS
POPULATION · 14.458 inhabitants.
ALTITUDE 180 feet.
SCALE
0 50 100 200 300 400 500 m
HOTELS: a Hôtel de la Croix d'Or
b Hôtel du Lion Rouge
Streets and roads impracticable for motor-cars.
N
Ferme de St Crépin
MAIL
ROND-POINT DU MAIL
ARRAS 122
PÉRONNE 79
CHAUNY 31
ST QUENTIN 60
LAON 32
RETHEL 89
Av. de Vauxrot
Av. de Laon
Bd Pasteur
Mail Promenades
AISNE RIV.
Octroi
Gare de St Waast
Usine à Gaz
Jeu de Paume
Prison
GRAND PLACE
Palais de Justice
Collège
Intendance
Hôtel de Ville
PL. DU MAIL
Anc. Abb. St Médard
Pont Neuf
Bd de Laon
Bd de Strasbourg
Bd de Metz
PL. D'ALSACE-LORRAINE
St Médard
Asile
Ecole
Gare du Port
Bd Bauhier
FAUBG ST WAAST
Cathédrale
PL. MANTOUE
Evêché
Caserne Charpentier
Maison de l'Arquebuse
Séminaire
Pte Caserne
Sous-Préfecture
PL. DAUPHINE
Couvent de la Croix
Manutention
St-Jean-des-Vignes
Jardin d'Horticulture
Octroi
Bd Jeanne-d'Arc
Bd d'Arc
Jeanne d'Arc
R. St Remy
R. Racine
R. Gambetta
R. du Faubg de Reims
PL. DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE
Bourse du Com.
Orphelinat St-Vincent-de-Paul
Villeneuve
St Germain
FAUBG DE REIMS
REIMS 57
ÉPERNAY 72.5
Fismes 30
FAUBG DE CRISE
Crise
Moulin du Pré-Foireux
Moulin de Notre-Dame
Hôpital
PL. DE TINFE
Ste Eugénie
Gare des Voyageurs (Ligne du Nord)
LAON
REIMS
BELLEU
ÉPERNAY 71
Dormans 46
Fère-en-T. 26
CHATEAU-THIERRY 41
Oulchy-le-Chât. 20
COMPIEGNE
PARIS
SOISSONS
SENLIS 66.5
PARIS 109.5
MEAUX 65.5
Villers-Cotterets 29.5
Bois des Sapins
Halte
COMPIEGNE
AMIENS 98.5
BEAUVAIS 95
COMPIEGNE 38
FAUBG ST CHRISTOPHE
R. du Fg St-Christophe
Cimetière
Chemin du Paradis
R. de Meneau
PL. ST CHRISTOPHE
Octroi
R. St Christophe
R. du Collège
R. du CLOITRE
PL. DU CLOITRE
R. de l'Ecole
R. Bauhier
R. Notre Dame
R. Pierre l'Ivrée
R. de la Bannière
R. de la Porte
R. de l'Arc
R. d'Hericourt
R. des Minimes
R. de l'Ecole
R. de la Fontaine
R. de la Pépinière
R. de la Terrière
Crise RO
V-O
N 2
N 31
VII
VI
V
IV
III
II
I

ITINERARY IN THE CITY (pp. 15-51).



Starting from the **Cathedral** *follow the streets indicated by* **continuous** *lines, in the direction of the arrows.*

The **numbers** *indicate the* **pages** *where the corresponding* **photographs** *will be found.*



SOISSONS IN 1914, *seen from the Northern Tower of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes Abbey.*

The German bombardments made countless ruins throughout the town. Everywhere one sees shattered walls, hanging roofs, and heaps of rubbish and stones that once were houses.

The ruins are gradually being cleared away, to make room for the new life which is springing up, but signs of the destruction will long remain.

SOISSONS IN NOVEMBER 1918.
Note the separation of the Cathedral Tower from the Nave (*pp.* 19-24)

VISIT TO THE CITY AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

(*See plan, p.* 12 *and itineraries, pp.* 13 & 52).

Do not miss : The Cathedral (*p.* 15) ; **the ruins of the Abbey of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes** (*p.* 44).

Archæological Curiosities : THE CHURCH AND CLOISTER OF SAINT-LÉGER (*p.* 35) ; THE OLD CHURCH OF SAINT-PIERRE-AU-PARVIS (*p.* 42); THE CRYPT OF THE OLD ABBEY OF SAINT-MÉDARD (*p.* 61).

Other sights : THE MAISON DE L'ARQUEBUSE (*p* 43). THE MUSEUM (*p.* 40).

Souvenirs and traces of the war : THE RUINS IN THE TOWN, THE MAIL (*p.* 54), THE BRIDGES (*pp.* 55 & 63) THE FAUBOURG ST. WAAST (*p.* 62), THE MILITARY WORKS FROM VAUXROT TO ST. PAUL (*pp.* 56-61).

TWO ITINERARIES are given, each starting from and returning to THE CATHEDRAL, which include all points of interest in the city and its environs :

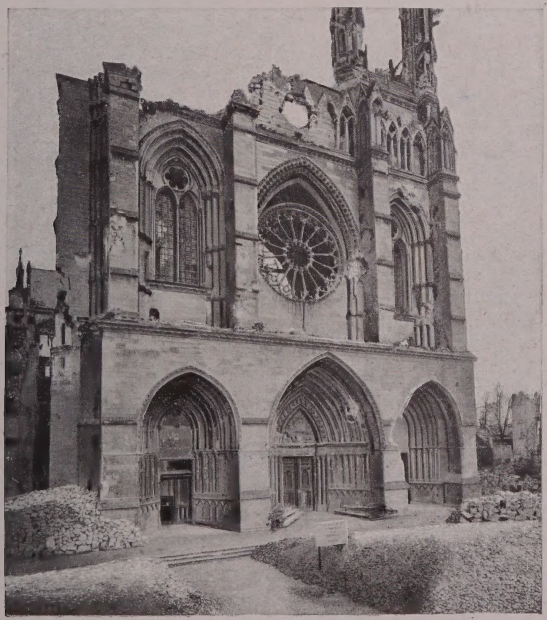
First Itinerary (*p.* 13) **The City** (*pp.* 15-51).
Second Itinerary (*p.* 52) **The Surroundings** (*pp* 53-63).

FIRST ITINERARY — VISIT TO THE CITY

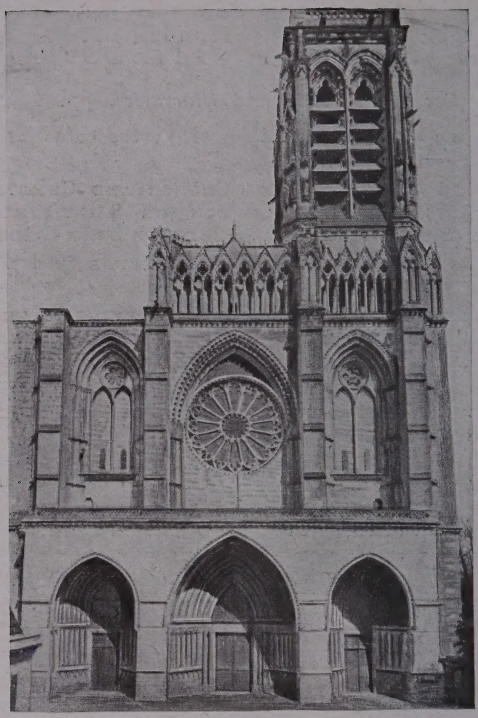
THE CATHEDRAL

In April 1919, *visitors entered through the door in the Place du Cloître* (*see pp.* 29 & 32).

The Cathedral of Soissons (H.M.) may be considered as a miniature of



THE CATHEDRAL IN NOVEMBER 1918.



THE CATHEDRAL BEFORE THE WAR.
The unfinished main front had only one tower.

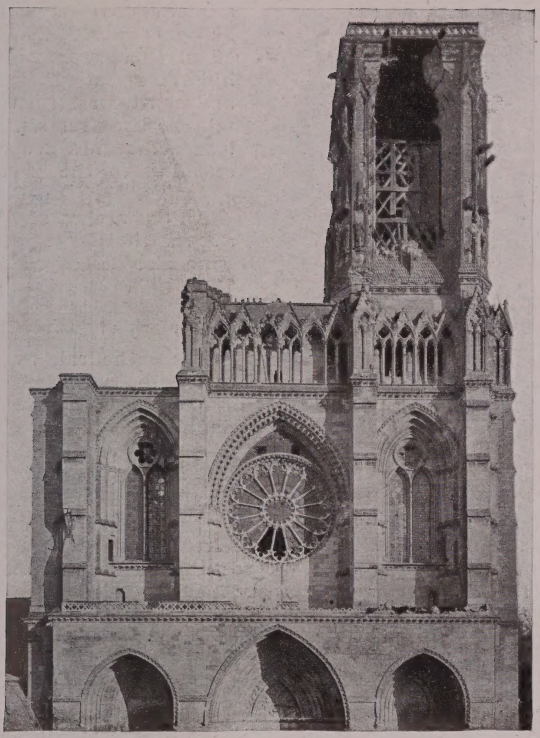
that of Amiens. For the purity of its lines and simplicity of arrangement, it is probably the finest of the secondary Cathedrals in France.

It was very quickly built, of hard Soissons stone, and is peculiar in that building began at the south arm of the transept, - primitive Gothic in style, - during the last third of the 12th century. Next were built, in pointed Gothic, the choir (completed in 1212) then the nave. The main body of the cathedral was completed in the middle of the 13th century, with the exception of the high parts of the main front (on which a single tower was built in the 14th century) and of the façade of the north arm of the transept (also 14th century).

The cathedral of Soissons, like that of Arras, has greatly suffered in its vital parts. The nave, which partly fell in during 1915-1916, was, with the aisles, entirely destroyed by the end of 1918. The tower, which, though severely damaged by enemy shell-fire, was still standing, collapsed at the same time. The transept and choir alone escaped with slight damage.

Principal Façade of the Cathedral.

The West front contains three doorways, finished about 1230, but disfigured in the 18th century by roughcast, which destroyed their 13th century decoration, since replaced by pseudo-Gothic ornament.



THE TOWER IN JUNE 1915.
The collapse of the mullion laid bare the framework of the belfry.

Above the large rose-window, set in a tierce-point arch, rises a graceful gallery composed of double arches surmounted by gables, which is carried all round the single tower, about 241 feet in height.

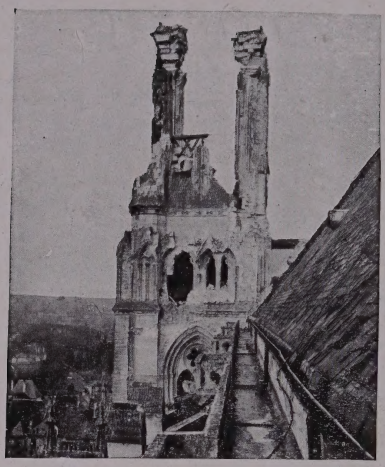
The tower comprised on each front two long bays separated by a mullion. Its later date was noticeable chiefly in the statues of apostles, saints and bishops, sheltered beneath finely carved canopies, which ornamented the corner abutments.

Throughout the war, the German gunners made a constant target of the cathedral tower.

In June 1915, large calibre shells caused the collapse of the great mullion separating the two bays on the west front, which fell to the ground, a large breach in the upper part of the tower laying bare the framework of the belfry (*photo above*). The same collapse caused the fall of almost all the gables of the lower gallery, the left bay of which had previously been struck by several shells.

Until 1918, no further damage of importance was done to the façade, but in August of that year, some days after the French had retaken Soissons, three sides of the tower (north, south and east) and the interior framework of the belfry were entirely destroyed by the

***



THE TOWER IN MARCH 1919.

numerous German shells. In September 1918, all that remained of the tower were the two buttresses at the north-west and south-west corners. By a miracle they remain poised, but loosened stones keep constantly crashing to the ground (*photo opposite*).

All the arches of the gallery above the large rose-window were also destroyed in August 1918.

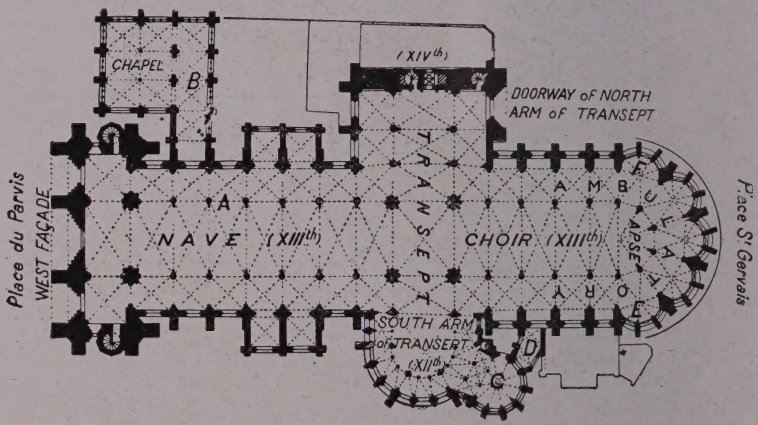
Interior of the Cathedral.

The cathedral, over 300 feet in length, comprises :

A Nave with seven bays and double side-aisles, with chapels of a later date added to the last four bays.

A Transept, the south-arm of which ends in a semi-circle, and the north-arm in a straight wall.

A Choir with four bays and a semi-circular Apse surrounded by an ambulatory, off which open eight rectangular chapels, and, at the apse, five radial polygonal chapels.



PLAN OF THE CATHEDRAL

A. — Pillar of the Nave broken in 1915.
B. — Gallery of the old Cathedral Cloister.
C. — Chapel in the South Arm.
D. — Vestry Passage (statue of Virgin and Child).
E. — St. Ruffin's Chapel (17th century statue of the saint).
F. — St. Valère's Chapel (17th century statue of the saint).

The Nave before the Bombardments.

Completed about 1230, the Nave - now entirely destroyed - was regarded before the war as one of the best examples of the harmonious simplicity of early 13th century Gothic architecture.

The central vault was about 103 feet in height.

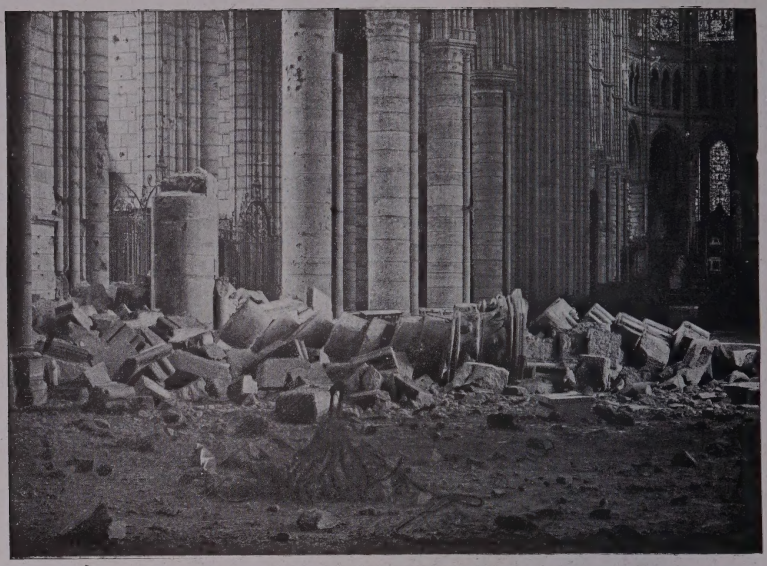
The bays were divided by columns flanked on the side facing the grand nave by a small engaged shaft. On their fine capitals, decorated with four rows of crockets or foliage, rested the large arches of the ground floor, and the groups of five small columns which supported the springing of the pointed arches of the vault.

The large arcades were surmounted by a shallow triforium and high double windows with dividing mullions.

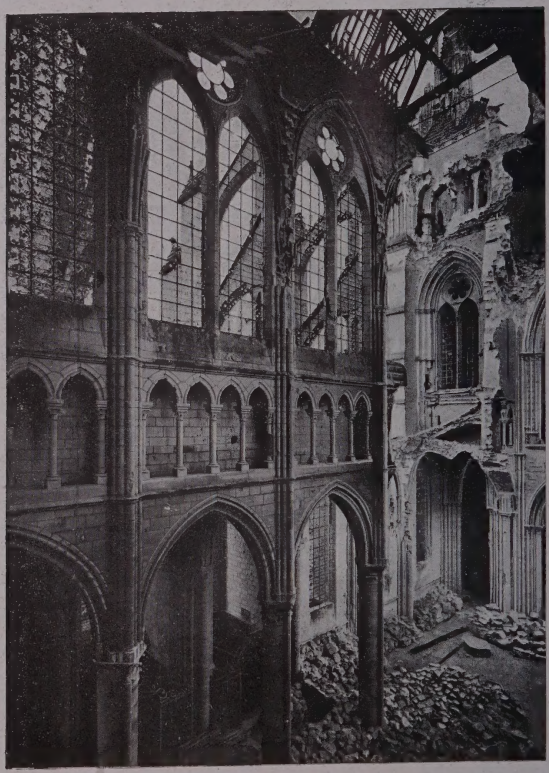
The wide, lofty aisles with windows gave additional light to the body of the church. Their vaulting was pointed and terminated at the last bays in chapels built for the most part in the 18th century.

In the second bay of the north aisle, a gallery (*B on plan*), the remains of the old cathedral cloister, gave access to a large chapel (Chapelle des Œuvres) with two naves of three bays. It was the old chapter-house, built in the 13th century, by prolonging the west front but completely remodelled in the 19th century.

THE NAVE BEFORE THE BOMBARDMENTS.



COLLAPSE OF THE PILLAR, FEBRUARY 1915.



SOUTHERN AISLE AND TRIFORIUM, NOVEMBER 1918.

The destruction of the Nave and fall of the Pillar.

Early in February 1915, a projectile, entering by a hole made by a previous shell in the wall of the south aisle, struck the second column (*A on plan, p.* 18) on the left of the main nave, which was broken in two about 13 feet from the ground (*photos pp.* 20-21). The upper part, with the capital and courses supporting the springing of the vault, gave way, dragging down in its fall a portion of the vault and of the wall at the back of the triforium.

The ruins accumulated rapidly. By the end of March, the roof of the grand nave and of the north aisle, which the broken pillar had sustained, collapsed. The whole of the triforium, the large window, the flying buttress outside, the framework, and the roofing of the bay of the aisle also gave way. An enormous breach was made in the cathedral, and the floor of the nave was covered with a shapeless mass of broken stones, which increased during the following months.

THE GREAT NAVE AND NORTHERN AISLE, NOVEMBER 1918.
Behind the two standing pillars is seen the base of the pillar which collapsed in Feb. 1915. *The fall is shown on p.* 20.

THE FALLEN VAULTING LEFT BARE THE DAMAGED FRAMEWORK OF THE ROOF.

BREACH IN THE NAVE, NOVEMBER 1918.

The fall of the Vaulting.

The vaults of the remaining bays, already weakened, could not withstand the renewed bombardments. One after another they crashed to the ground, with the exception of those of the first and seventh bays. Everywhere else, pieces of broken or disjointed framework, supporting a completely ruined roof, are exposed to view (*photo above*).

Several of the large windows on the north side have also fallen in and all the stained glass has been smashed.

THE NAVE, AUGUST 1918.

The Final Ruin.

The bombardments of 1918 destroyed the nave beyond hope of repair.

Several large pillars collapsed and a considerable portion of the upper part of the side walls, large arches and triforium fell in to the right and left.

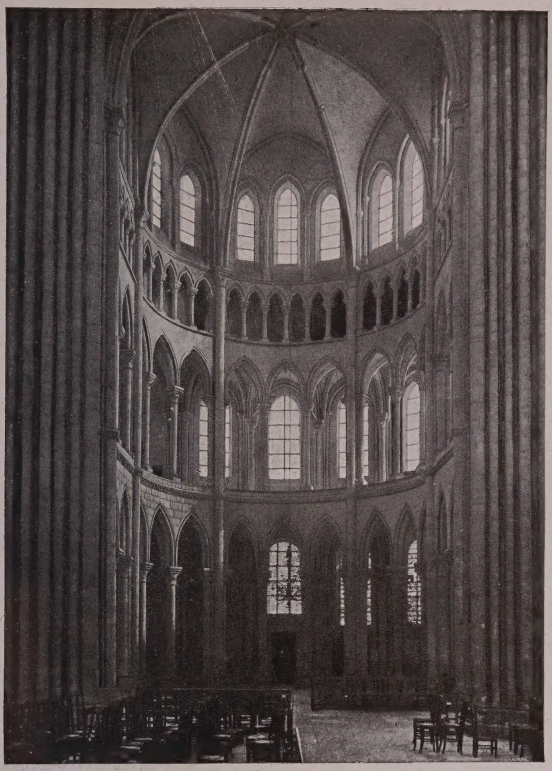
Three bays near the west front, with their large arches and the aisles were completely destroyed. All this masonry fell inside the nave, forming across its entire breadth a heap of debris more than 19 feet high and about 33 feet long.

Fragments of vaulting, bases of pillars, stones from the roof, were mixed in shapeless chaos with a quantity of architectural and sculptured motives, notably the beautiful capitals and the key-stones of the vault, mostly broken And on this heap of ruins the roof-timbers of the framework, deprived of all support, fell by degrees in their turn.

The old harmonious construction of the nave is now to be seen only in the bays nearest the transept.

The Chapelle des Œuvres was struck several times. The most serious damage was caused during the first bombardments of 1914 by a shell which exploded on the roof of the gallery (*B on plan p.* 18, *photo below*) which leads to the chapel. Penetrating the roof and the framework, it caused the vault to fall in, broke the arches, and shattered the stained-glass of the chapel windows.

GALLERY GIVING ACCESS TO THE CHAPELLE DES ŒUVRES, NOV. 1918.



SOUTH ARM OF TRANSEPT. *See the exterior, p. 29.*

South Arm of the Transept.

The bombardments have spared the south arm of the transept, a marvel of grace and simplicity, built about 1175, by Bishop Nivelon of Chérisy. It is the oldest and also the least elevated portion of the cathedral.

The arm of the transept ends in a semi-circle (a peculiarity which it shares with those of the old Cathedral of Noyon and numerous Rhenish churches) and is surrounded by an ambulatory.

In style it differs distinctly from that of the rest of the building, and presents the distinguishing features of primitive Gothic.

The triforium — which elsewhere consists only of a narrow gallery — is here double. It comprises a story of high, wide, arched tribunes, grouped three and three, surmounted by a narrow passage with graceful colonnettes.

The main vault is supported by six pointed ribs which intersect in a central key-stone ornamented with six angels.

The south arm of the transept is lighted by three series of windows. Small semi-circular bays are cut in the wall of the ambulatory. The galleries are lighted — except on the right, which is ornamented with rose-windows — by tierce-point windows in groups of three. There is a final row of high tierce-point windows, also in groups of three, above the triforium.

****

Some of the capitals are masterpieces of ornamental sculpture. Their decoration consists either of the foliage characteristic of Romanesque capitals (acanthus leaves) or of projecting crockets, — one of the earliest examples of this distinctive ornament of Gothic capitals.

On the east side of the south arm of the transept there is a two-storied polygonal chapel (*C on plan, p.* 18) of the same period. The keystone of the vault of the lower chapel represents two angels carrying the *Agnus Dei* on a cloth. The upper chapel, in which the Treasure was formerly kept, communicates with the galleries.

The Choir and Apse.

The choir, where, on the completion of the south arm of the transept, Bishop Nivelon of Chérisy continued the building of the Cathedral (1200-1212), is one of the earliest examples of Pointed Gothic — so-called on account of the sharp outline of the arches. A notable characteristic of this is the transformation of the wide galleries of the triforium into a narrow gallery, which gives greater importance to the wide arches of the ground floor and to the high windows of the upper story.

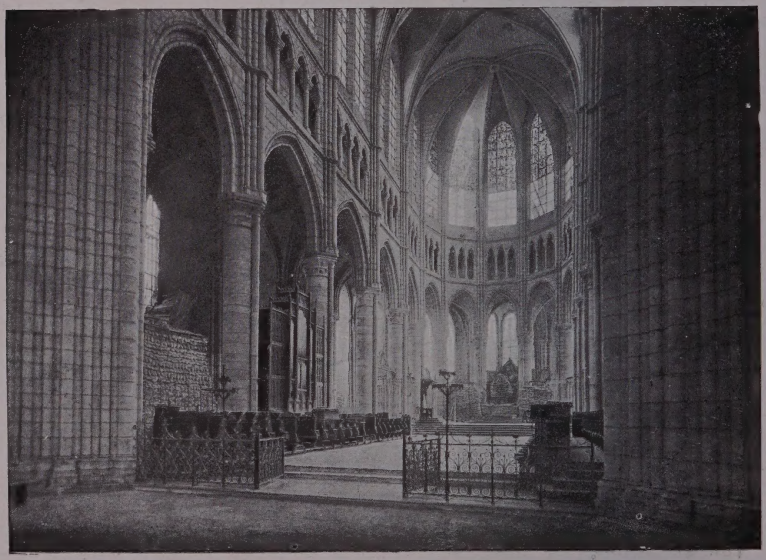
Its general plan is similar to that of the nave, built immediately afterwards : lofty wide arches, narrow triforium, high windows (but without mullions, forming a single bay), and pointed vaults of rectangular plan.

The Choir is flanked by side-aisles, off which open, on each side four rectangular chapels with groined vaults.

The second chapel of the aisle has an inscription recording the date on which the Canons took possession of the Choir :

Anno milleno biscenteno duodeno hunc intrare chorum
Cepit grex canonicorum tercio idus maii.

(In the year 1212, on the third Ides of May, the Canons first took possession of the Choir).



THE CHOIR. *On the left and at the back sand-bags protected the art treasures*

The south side-aisle communicates with the chapel attached to the south arm of the transept by a 15th century vaulted corridor (*D on plan p.* 18) in which there is a fine 16th century statue of the Virgin and Infant seated.

The two side-aisles continue round the semi-circular apse, forming an ambulatory surrounded by five shallow radial chapels. The central chapel is consecrated, as usual, to the Virgin. The pointed vaults of the chapels unite with those of the ambulatory, eight pointed ribs meeting in the same keystone.

The choir, scarcely touched by enemy fire up to December 1916, suffered more serious damage then and in January 1917.

Shells pierced the vault in two places and also penetrated several parts of the triforium wall, breaking the arches. In the apse, portions of the vault were injured and parts of the 13th century stained-glass, which it was not possible to remove from the high windows, were damaged.

The vital parts of the choir escaped serious damage, and it was possible during the second half of 1917, to carry out temporary repairs after the retreat of the Germans. At the same time, in order to make the choir — as well as the transept, which had also escaped serious injury — once more available for public worship, a partition was built shutting off the nave (*photo p.* 24).

This protective partition shielded part of the building very effectively in 1918, when the Choir and Transept escaped serious damage.

Most of the fine 13th century stained-glass windows were removed in 1915 to a place of safety.

They were originally taken from the church of Saint-Yved-de-Braines and inserted during the 19th century in the high windows of the apse and those of the Lady Chapel

Thanks to the protective measures taken, the interior decoration of the choir escaped injury. It dates from the 18th century and comprises a high altar of marble, surrounded by a wrought-iron railing, and flanked by two marble statues of the Virgin and the Angel Gabriel, depicting the Annunciation. Two consoles of carved and gilded wood with marble tops, complete this group. The stalls only are 17th century.

The North Arm of the Transept.

The north arm of the transept, flanked by aisles, shows the same arrangement as the nave, but ends in a straight wall (late 13th century) which was ornamented in the 14th century. A clerestory gallery joining the triforium of the side walls, and carried on small, light columns, is built against this wall. Above are pierced a row of bays and a fine rose-window containing old stained glass.

During the war, a fine picture by Rubens (1635), painted for the Franciscan Fathers in return for their having nursed him through an illness contracted at Soissons, was removed from the north arm of the transept to a place of safety. This picture, which represents the Adoration of the Shepherds, has a fine frame of carved and gilded wood of the Regency period.

The bombardments did little damage to the north arm of the transept and to the intersection of the transepts. The worst injury was the falling in of one of the vaults of the north arm, and the breaking of the arch-band uniting two of the large pillars of the transept.

WOODWORK IN THE SOUTHERN AISLE.

The art treasures.

In addition to the works of art preserved in the choir and transept, the Cathedral possesses a fragment of a 16th century *tapestry*, all that remains of a large piece devoted to the legend of Saint-Gervais and Saint-Protais, which, before the War, hung in the north aisle of the nave.

Before the War, at the entrance to the nave on each side of the main portal, were memorial **statues** of two abbesses of the ancient abbey of Notre-Dame, represented kneeling, with folded hands, in the costume of the period : *Henriette de Lorraine d'Elbeuf*, abbess from 1660 to 1669, and *Gabrielle Marie de la Rochefoucauld* (1683-1693).

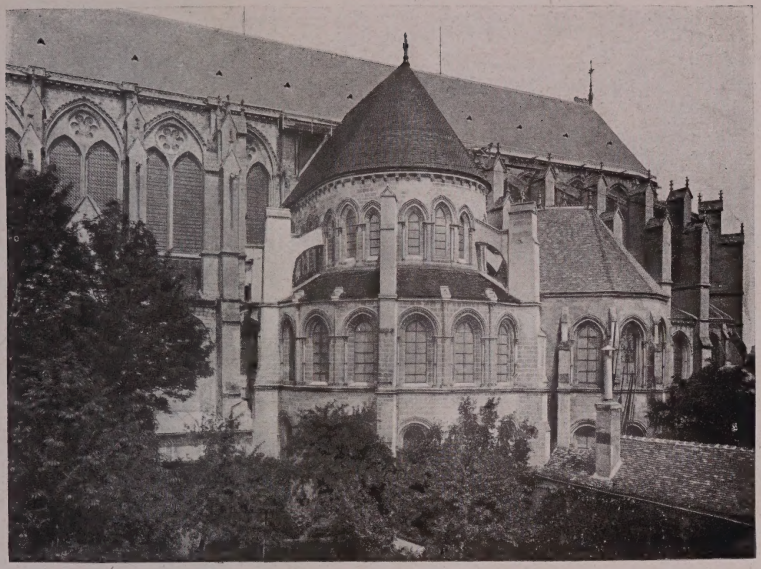
Photographs of these two statues are given below.

In the sacristy are preserved fragments of flamboyant style **woodwork**, a 17th century **chalice** of finely chased gilt silver, a magnificent **Crucifix** by *Girardon* and a fine **reliquary** in gilt copper (1560), representing the plan of Soissons with its battlemented walls and churches of the period. (*See p.* 3.)

HENRIETTE DE LORRAINE D'ELBEUF

GABRIELLE-MARIE DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULD

Funeral Statues to two Abbesses of the old Abbey of Notre-Dame.



SOUTHERN ARM OF TRANSEPT. *See the Interior, p.* 25.

Side façades of the Cathedral.

The exterior of Soissons Cathedral is remarkable for the great simplicity of its lines and its well-balanced construction.

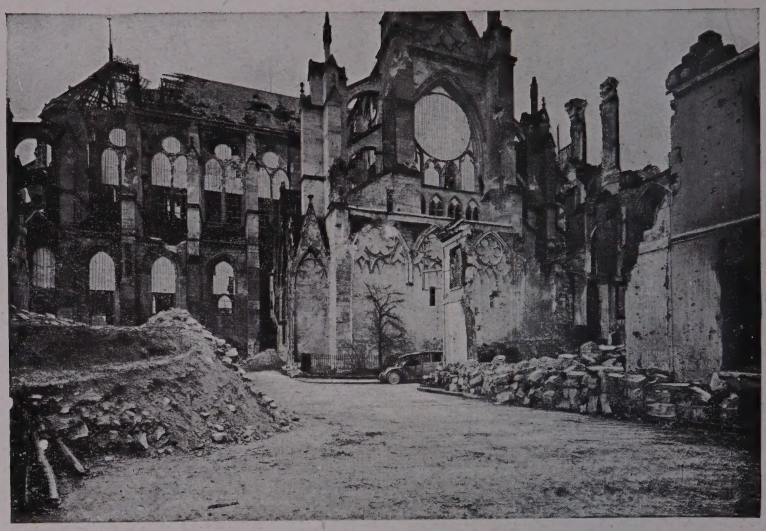
The high vaults are supported by two super-imposed 13th century flying buttresses, which are supported on one side by powerful abutments and on the other by small engaged columns, the capitals of which are decorated with crockets. (*See photos, pp.* 20, 22, 24).

Against the straight wall which ends the north arm of the transept are 14th century radiating arcades (*p.* 30). This wall is pierced by a large rose-window set in tierce-point arch. It ends in a gable with 14th century ornament, and is flanked by two bell-turrets, one of which was destroyed.

(*Photos, pp.* 30 & 31).

To the east of the north arm of the transept, obstructing the first window of the choir aisle, is a 14th century portal with a sharply pointed gable, supported by two buttresses (*photo opposite*). The higher finish and greater adornment of 14th century decorative art is clearly to be seen here : sharply pointed gables ornamented with trefoil over the portal and buttresses, and intricately carved bouquets of foliage on the capitals, replacing the hooked crockets of the preceding century.

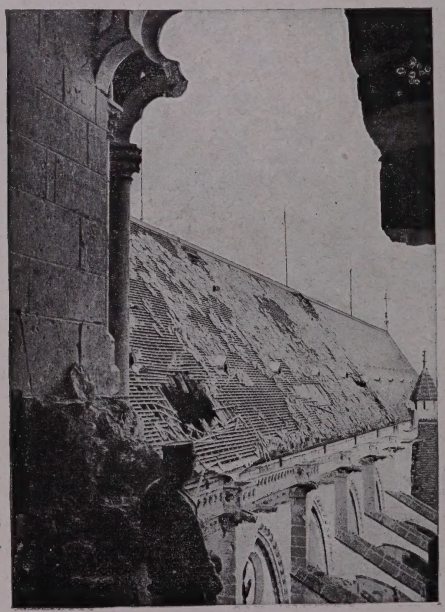
DOORWAY OF THE NORTHERN ARM OF TRANSEPT.



NORTH FRONT. *Choir and North Arm of transept, Nov.* 1918. *See description, p.* 29.

The Exterior of the Cathedral (*Nov.* 1918).

The bombardments seriously damaged the side façades of the cathedral. All the stonework, bays, flying buttresses and abutments, and all the roofing and framework collapsed as far as the first bays of the nave. The building is, so to speak, cut into two unequal parts throughout its entire width, by an immense gap. (*Photo p.* 31, *Panorama p.* 14).



THE FIRST SHELLS TO HIT THE MAIN ROOF.

The rounded arm of the transept and the south end of the choir suffered comparatively little. On the other hand, the bombardments seriously injured the chevet and the north front of the choir. The upper part of one of the high windows in the apse was struck. A buttress of the Lady Chapel was badly broken, while two unexploded shells are embedded in the damaged stone-work of a neighbouring buttress. On the north front of the choir most of the abutments were damaged and the flying buttresses which support it, more or less in-

NORTH FRONT. *North Arm of Transept, Nave and Chapelle des Œuvres, Nov* 1918.

jured. The roofing was ruined and the framework broken. The north arm of the transept, especially the gable, was also somewhat damaged. One of the turrets surrounding it was broken off (*Photo above*).

However, the north front of the nave suffered most (*photo above*). In addition to the opening made at the west end, the stone-work and roofing were injured throughout their entire length. Only the last two windows next the transept retained their mullions, the others being more or less completely destroyed. Of the flying-buttresses and abutment-piers, very little remains standing.

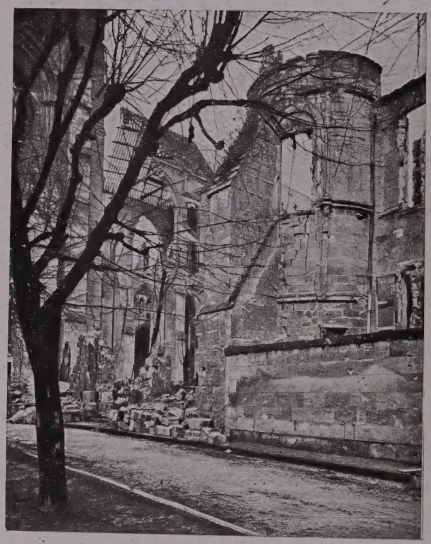
THE CHAPELLE DES ŒUVRES.

Seen from the corner of the Rues de la Buerie and Jaulzy, Nov. 1918.

VISIT TO THE TOWN

On leaving the Cathedral, follow the itinerary on page 13.

The surroundings of Soissons, like the cathedral, suffered severely from the bombardments. In the Place de la Cathédrale (or Place Mantoue), the Rue des Minimes and the Place du Cloître are **broken roofs**, and in the Rue du Beffroi, **ruins** of houses.



13th. CENTURY TURRET, *Place de la Cathédrale.*

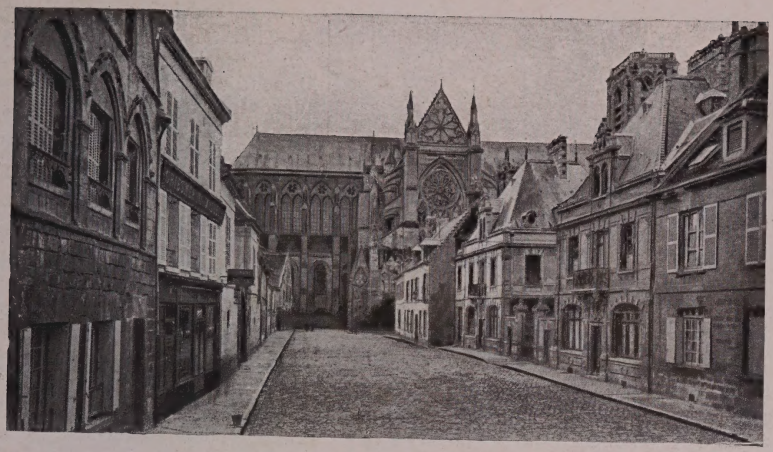
At n° 6 of the Place de la Cathédrale, in front of the bombarded Presbytery, stands a much damaged 13th century **tower** (*photo opposite*) all that remains of the old Bishop's Palace, rebuilt in 1638, of brick and stone, at the south of the Place between the Rue de l'Évêché and the Rue des Minimes.

In the court of the Bishop's Palace (*reached through the Rue de l'Evêché*), near the Rue des Minimes, there still stand about 15 yards of the old **Gallo-Roman wall** which surrounded the town (*hist mon.*)

The wall has a facing of dressed stone interrupted at frequent intervals by a string-course of red bricks.

To reach the Place du Cloître take the Rue de l'Evêché, round the chevet of the Cathedral.

PLACE DE LA CATHÉDRALE AND RUE DU BEFFROI.



THE PLACE DU CLOITRE IN 1914.

The **Place du Cloître,** at right angles to the north portal of the Cathedral, was formerly lined by the houses of the Canons. Of these old dwellings there remain **three bays in tierce-point** (13th century), on the first story of a house (*N°* 14) in the *Place* (*on the left of the photographs on this page*).

Opposite are two **Renaissance façades.**

Most of the houses in the *Place* were badly damaged by shells aimed at the cathedral.

Fortunately, these three remarkable façades escaped injury.

THE PLACE DU CLOITRE IN 1918.

THE RUE DU COLLÈGE.

Take the Rue du Collège on the left, devastated by incendiary bombs from aeroplanes (*photo opposite*); at the end of a blind alley stands the **door of the college** (*hist. mon.*) (*Photo below*) built between 1740 and 1760.

Doric pillars support a large frontal with decorative carving representing *Pallas* and *Ceres*.

THE DOOR OF THE COLLEGE

This door is intact, but the college buildings suffered severely.

Several shells penetrated the walls and roofing, exploding in the dormitories and class-rooms and destroying all before them.

Follow the Rue du Collège as far as the Rue des Cordeliers (*first on the right*) *which leads to the* **Grand'Place** (*photo below*). Here are 18th century houses (*N*^{os} 9-11), the early 19th century **theatre** and a late 19th century ornamental **fountain.**

The theatre suffered severely from bombardment, its roof being completely destroyed, but the fountain escaped injury.

THE GRAND'PLACE AND THEATRE.

SAINT-LÉGER CHURCH AND VICINTY.

Take the rue Saint-Léger as far as the Church of Saint-Léger, the houses round about which have been destroyed (photo above).

CHURCH OF SAINT-LÉGER

This church was formerly part of an abbey founded in 1152 in memory of Saint-Léger, Bishop of Autun, assassinated in 678 by the Mayor of the Palace, Ebroïn.

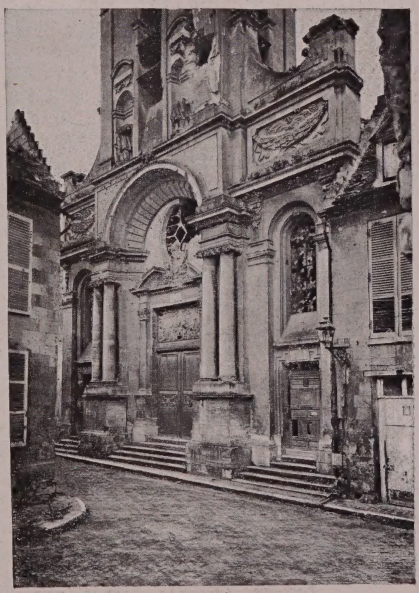
The nave and west front were rebuilt in the 17th century, after the sack of the monastery by the Huguenots in 1567. It is now secularized.

The nave, separated from the rest of the building by a wall, was used before the war as a hall for public meetings, while a geological museum was to have been installed in the transept and choir.

The façade is 17th century.

The central semi-circular porch is supported by twin columns with Ionic capitals.

Its large doorway, surmounted by a broken triangular frontal, is flanked by fluted pilasters.



SAINT-LÉGER CHURCH

SAINT-LÉGER CHURCH.
Cloister and North Front. In the background : Ruined Tower.

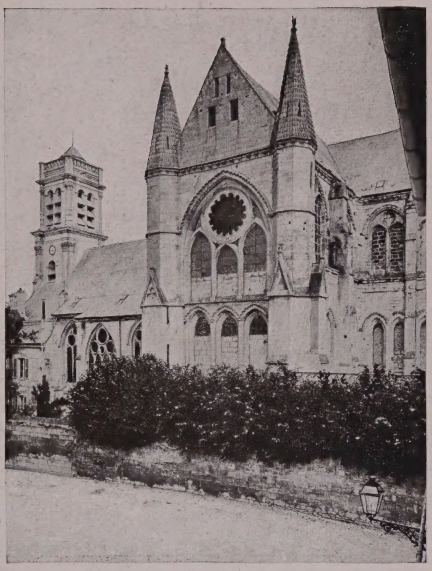
Above the porch rises the two-storied tower. The first story has a single semi-circular bay on each front, and is divided by Corinthian pilasters. The second story has two twin bays and fluted columns with Corinthian capitals at the corners.

The whole east front of the upper story was demolished by the bombardments (*photo above*). The windows and corner columns fell on the roof of the nave, breaking it in many places

The nave, with double side-aisles, was reconstructed in the 17th century, and is of little interest. Three of its vaulted bays have fallen in (*photo below*).

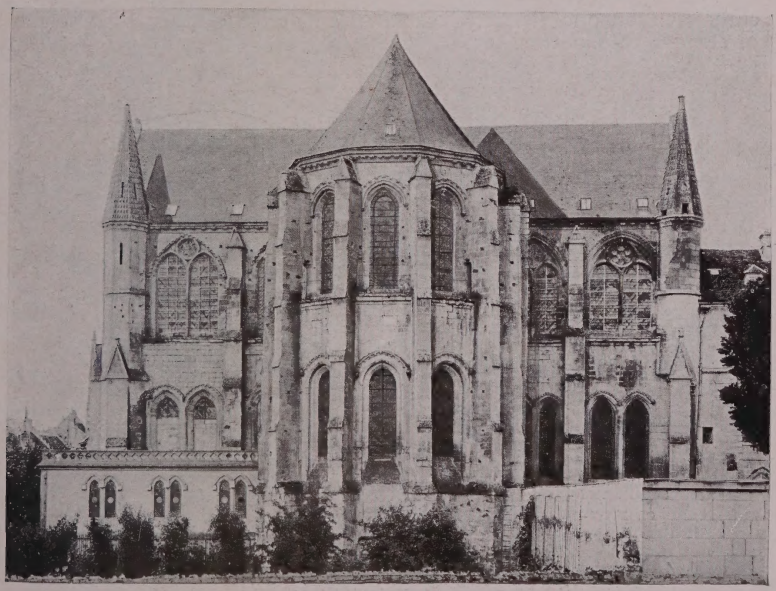
THE NAVE, ST-LÉGER CHURCH.

The two-armed transept, as well as the choir which terminates in a canted chevet (*photos opposite and below*) were less injured. They date from the 13th century, but have been restored. They have pointed vaults, and are lighted by high and low windows separated by a narrow triforium. The windows of the transept-ends and of the choir are double and surmounted by a rose-window; those of the apse are single and framed outside by abutments. The wall at the end of the north arm of the transept, at the back of which were the monastic buildings, has no opening, but that of the south arm is entirely open. The exterior façades of both arms end in a gable pierced by narrow slits and are flanked by buttresses in the form of polygonal turrets. The east buttress of the north arm was badly damaged by a shell.



SOUTH ARM OF TRANSEPT, ST-LÉGER CHURCH, IN 1914.

Shell holes are visible in the walls of the chevet and in the vaulting of the south arm of the transept.



CHEVET AND TRANSEPT, ST-LÉGER CHURCH, IN 1914.

THE CLOISTER OF ST-LÉGER CHURCH IN 1914.
The old cloister was full of flowers...

Through the north aisle of the nave of the church the old **cloister** of the abbey, built at the end of the 13th and beginning of the 14th centuries, is reached. The north and east galleries alone remain. Each gallery comprises four bays, the pointed vaults of which are supported on one side by brackets, and on the other by a cluster of slender colonnettes.

IN THE CLOISTER, *see p.* 36.

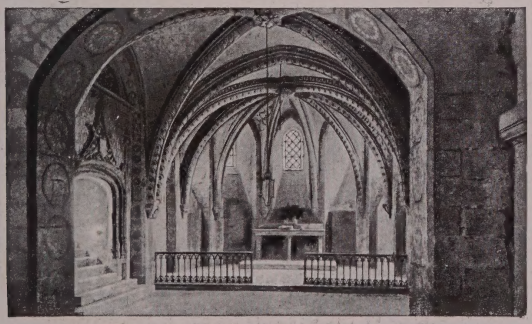
THE CLOISTER OF ST-LÉGER CHURCH, IN 1918.
...Then came the war.

To the east of the cloister is the old 13th century chapter-house, disfigured. It is lighted by three windows and has pointed arches resting on columns with crocketed capitals.

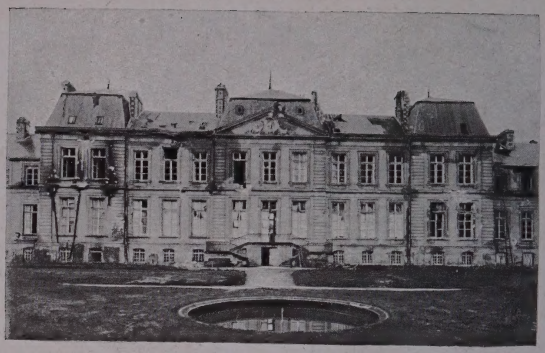
The walls of the cloister and chapter-house bear numerous traces of the bombardments.

The first door on the right in the east gallery of the cloister leads to a **crypt** below the church, built at the beginning of the 12th century and about 40 feet in length. It consists of two galleries with two bays, the groined ribs of which are carried on square pillars flanked by columns with cubic foliate capitals.

This crypt is prolonged, on the east, by a polygonal apse lighted by small tierce-point windows and having pointed vaulting which was rebuilt in the 13th century on the plan of the apse of the upper church (*photo below*).



THE CRYPT, ST-LÉGER CHURCH.



THE HÔTEL-DE-VILLE,
Front overlooking the gardens

Leaving Saint-Léger, turn to the left and follow the Rue de la Congrégation as far as the **Hôtel-de-Ville.**

The Hôtel-de-Ville occupies the old Hôtel de l'Intendance, built in 1772 on the site of the old castle which belonged to the Counts of Soissons in the Middle-Ages. Struck in various places by large calibre shells, it suffered considerable damage (*photo above*).

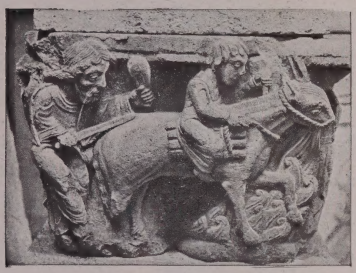
Its Museum and Library did not escape damage and were, moreover pillaged, while some of the pictures in the museum were lacerated. However, many objects were removed in time to be saved.

The **museum** contains some fine sculpture, including : the tympanum of a 13th century portal taken from the Church of Saint-Yved-de-Braisne, representing *The Descent of Christ into Hades;* another defaced 14th century tympanum from the cloister of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes ; a Romanesque storied capital : *Abraham sacrificing Isaac* (*photo p.* 41) ; other 12th century capitals with foliage ; the carved lintel of a Renaissance mantelpiece ; the memorial statue of an Abbess of Notre-Dame, etc.

TRENCHES IN THE GARDENS OF THE HÔTEL-DE-VILLE.

The other rooms of the museum contain objects of the pre-historic or Gallo-Roman epoch (e. g. Gallo-Roman dish in chased silver), an important collection of medals and ceramic ware, picture galleries, casts, etc...

The Library contains over 50 000 volumes and 200 manuscripts. Among the latter should be noted : a beautifully illuminated 12th century Missal of Saint-Médard ; a Bible of Saint-Yved-de-Braisne (12th century) ; the Charters and Records of the Abbey of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes ; a very fine manuscript of the first half of the 14th century, with miniatures : *The Pilgrimage of Human Life.*



ABRAHAM SACRIFICING ISAAC.

Storied Roman Capital

On leaving the Hôtel-de-Ville, follow on the left, the Rue de la Congrégation, then take the first street on the right (Rue du Coq-Lombard) *and go round the block of buildings on the right, bounded by the Rue du Coq-Lombard, Rue de Bauton and Rue des Francs-Boisiers which leads back to the Rue de la Congrégation.*

This is one of the best preserved corners of old Soissons. In spite of later structural alterations, several houses built between the 14th and 17th centuries bear traces of their original construction. One of them (n° 5 in the court) has a curious doorway with a carved 14th century tympanum.

A carved panel over the doorway represents the King of Spain bidding farewell to the King of France. This doorway leads to a tower of the same period (restored), the upper part of which was struck by a shell.

At n° 11, in the Rue de Bauton is the *Palais-de-Justice,* partly destroyed by shell-fire.

On leaving the Rue des Francs-Boisiers (*see* ruins of burnt houses), *follow the Rue de la Congrégation on the right, then the Rue du Commerce* (*its continuation*) *as far as the Place Saint-Pierre : on the left* are the ruins of the old Church of Saint-Pierre-au-Parvis.

CHURCH OF SAINT-PIERRE-AU-PARVIS. *South façade before the War*

The old Church of Saint-Pierre-au-Parvis (*Hist. Mon.*)

The apse, transept and three bays of the nave of the church, secularized at the time of the Revolution, were pulled down in 1800.

The two remaining bays of the nave were greatly damaged during the war by the explosion of a store of grenades. The roof and most of the vaulting have been destroyed.

Only the main front and the lower part of the south front (fine speci-

CHURCH OF SAINT-PIERRE-AU-PARVIS, *November* 1918.

mens of the Romanesque style of the middle of the 12th century) escaped with slight injury (*photo p.* 42).

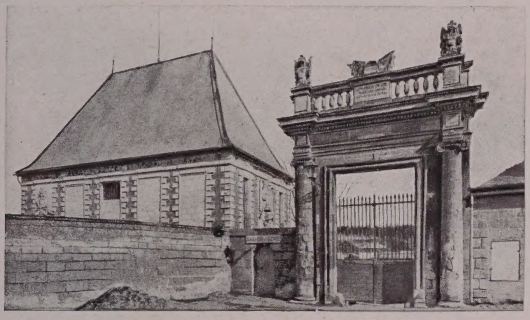
At the corner of the Place Saint-Pierre and the Rue de la Vieille-Gagnerie there are two semi-circular windows of great beauty, visible from the interior of the house no. 19-21.

Supported by four small columns with storied capitals representing monsters and fantastic animals, these two windows (now blocked up and serving as a wall for the first-floor room of a restaurant) are all that remains of a large church which belonged to the old Abbey of Notre-Dame.

This convent, founded in the 7th century, was rebuilt in 18th century.

The new buildings, completely disfigured by interior alterations and having no further historical interest, were used as barracks during the war. They were destroyed by the bombardments and fire.

Take the Rue de la Gagnerie, turn to the right into the Rue de la Bannière, then again to the right into the Rue Notre-Dame, at the end of which is the **Maison de l'Arquebuse** (*hist. mon.*), built in 1626 for the Guild of the Soissons Gunsmiths, and now devoted to military purposes (*photo below*).



THE MAISON DE L'ARQUEBUSE.

It is a lodge of brick and stone surmounted by a very steep roof, and containing a large hall lighted by ten bays. Its main front is embellished with ornaments of war.

The entrance, built in 1638 by order of Marshal d'Estrées, is Ionic in style and surmounted by an entablature decorated with trophies.

The upper part of the entablature at the north-east corner of the doorway was destroyed by a shell, while others injured the roof of the lodge.

Take the Rue des Feuillants opposite, then Rue Saint-Martin on the left, to the Place de la République, where are the Bourse du Commerce (1898) and the Monument to the Defence of Soissons in 1870 (inaugurated in 1901).

On the south side of the square and bordered by the river Crise, there is the fine garden of the Horticultural Society at present in very bad condition.

Follow the Rue de Château-Thierry, alongside the garden, then its continuation, the Boulevard Jeanne d'Arc, which makes a sharp bend, to the **Abbey** *of* **Saint-Jean-des-Vignes.**

ABBEY OF SAINT-JEAN-DES-VIGNES (*Hist. Mon.*)

Founded in 1076, the Abbey of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes was one of the richest and most powerful monasteries of the Middle-Ages.

The liberality of the Kings of France, bishops, nobility and middle classes enabled the monks in the 13th and 14th centuries to erect a large abbey-church and important monastic buildings, the plan of which has been preserved in an engraving of 1673, *reproduced below.*

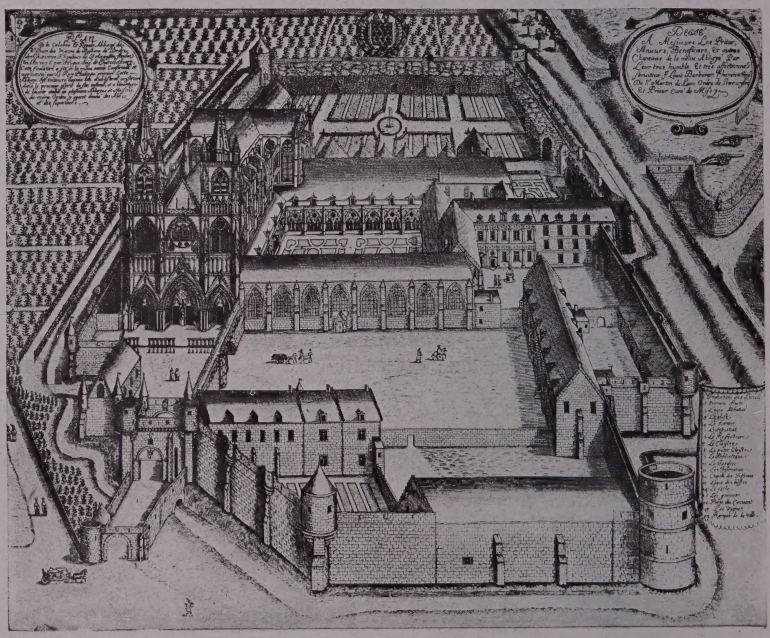
The plan is that followed almost invariably for monastic buildings. In the middle is the abbey-church. The monastery buildings proper : the rooms of the Regulars to which strangers are not admitted, the Novices' quarters, the dormitories and refectory, are grouped round the four galleries of the cloister, which extend from the south front of the church.

On the east side of the cloister is a smaller cloister, abutting on which are the strangers' rooms : the refectory and dormitories.

Behind, stands the isolated hospital with its own chapel. Near the entrance is the Abbot's house, and further to the east, the store-rooms.

The entrance was fortified, and a continuous wall with roadway, loop-holes and watch-towers, completely encircled the Abbey.

Beyond this wall stretched the vineyards and agricultural estates of the monastery. Although despoiled during the Hundred Years War, and later during the religious wars, the Abbey of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes remained rich and flourishing until the Revolution when the monks were expelled. Some years later (1805), an imperial decree issued at the request of the Bishop of Soissons, ordered the demolition of the church, the materials of which were to be used for repairing the cathedral. The protests of the inhabitants induced the Bishop to have the main front preserved.



PLAN OF THE MONASTERY. *Engraving by L. Baraban,* 1673.

The Façade of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes before the War.

Three late 13th century portals surmounted by gables open in the façade. Under the central portal are two **mutilated statues** : *on the right*, Saint-Augustin ; *on the left :* Saint-John-the-Baptist clothed in the skin of an animal.

A graceful clerestory gallery, continued at the back round a wide platform, which at one time formed a gallery above the grand nave, separates the central portal from the large rose-window set in an irregular arch. The latter has lost its interior net-work of mullions and is surmounted by a gable. The gallery and rose-window are late 14th century.

A two-storied tower crowned by a spire rises above each of the side portals. The first story dates from the end of the 14th century. The upper part, which differs in each tower, is more than a century later.

The south tower (*on the right of the photo below*), was about 230 feet in height.

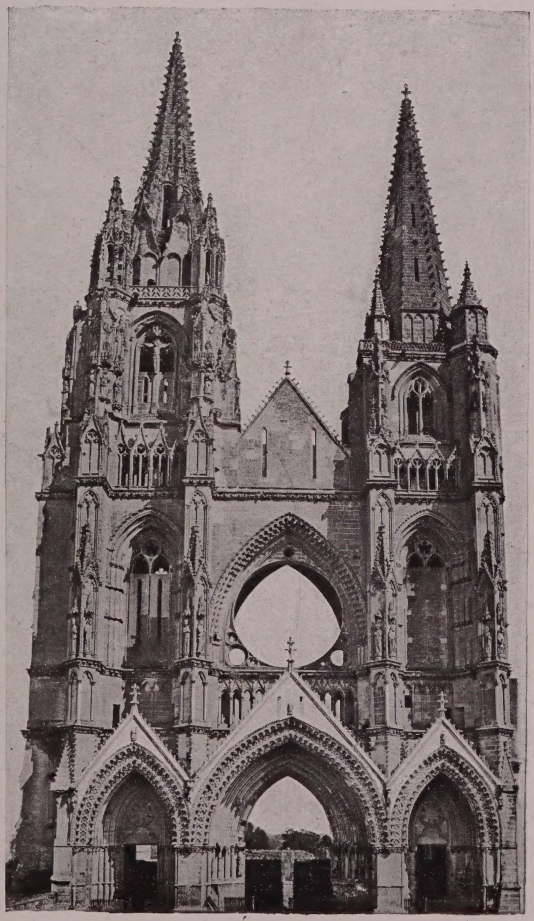
The north tower, finished in 1520, was higher (about 244 feet) and more massive.

On the first story, in the niche next the large rose-window, a statue of the Virgin faces a statue of the Angel of the Annunciation, which stands on the opposite buttress of the south tower.

Both stories of the north tower, separated by a Flamboyant gallery with very sharply pointed gables, are pierced with large bays divided by a mullion.

On the west side, against the mullion of the upper bay, is a figure of Christ crucified.

The octagonal spire, surrounded by four turrets, is pierced on each face by three openings of different sizes, the largest being under-most, while its angles are adorned with projecting crockets.



FRONT OF THE ABBEY OF ST-JEAN-DES-VIGNES BEFORE THE WAR.

NORTH TOWER.

SOUTH TOWER.

THE FRONT IN 1918.

THE DOORWAYS IN THE MAIN FRONT (1918).
Part of the ornamental stone-work was damaged by fire in 1870. *Keystones of the vaulting were shattered by shell-fire in* 1914.

SOUTH TOWER.

NORTH TOWER.

THE REAR SIDE OF THE MAIN FRONT. ON THE LEFT: *Entrance to the Cloister.*

The façade of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes after the bombardments.

Previously, in 1870, the façade of the church had been badly damaged. The German shellsset fire to a store of hay housed under the porches, the splays of which were destroyed (*p.* 46).

In 1914, it suffered fresh injury, both spires being struck by shells. The south tower lost its upper part, the remaining portion being torn open at the base. The other tower was badly indented near its point, while the carvings of the buttresses were injured. The whole façade was moreover pitted by shell-splinters.

The damage caused in 1918 was considerably greater. In some places the stone-work of the portals and towers was entirely destroyed, and in others indented more or less deeply. The fine and delicate carvings of the towers were also smashed. The north tower suffered most. A breach, jeopardizing its stability, was made almost the whole way up, and the upper part of the spire fell to the ground, like the other spire had done four years before. The interior vaulting which connected the two towers, partially fell in.

At the back of the façade (*photo above*) which was also struck in several places, there are still traces of the first bay of the old nave of the abbey church, pulled down under the Empire.

WESTERN GALLERY OF THE CLOISTER. *Seen from Doorway. Nov.* 1918.

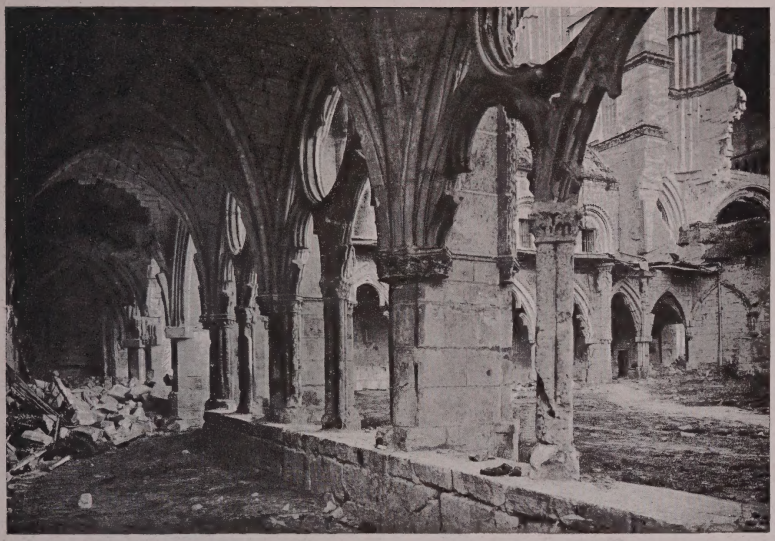
The Great Cloister of Saint-Jean-des-Vignes.

Under the south portal stands a 13th century doorway, with vaulting and tympanums decorated with finely carved foliage, which led from the abbey church to the great cloister.

Of the great 14th century cloister, only the south and west galleries remain. Each has seven bays with pointed arches resting, on one side, on brackets ornamented with foliage or human figures, and on the other, on piers surrounded by small columns (*photos above and below*).

The large arches in tierce-point, ornamented with fine mouldings and separated by highly-wrought buttresses, formed an inner arcade composed of two bays surmounted by a rose-window. Traces of it are left in three bays of the south gallery (*photo below*). The arches formerly contained windows.

SOUTHERN GALLERY OF THE CLOISTER, NOV. 1918.

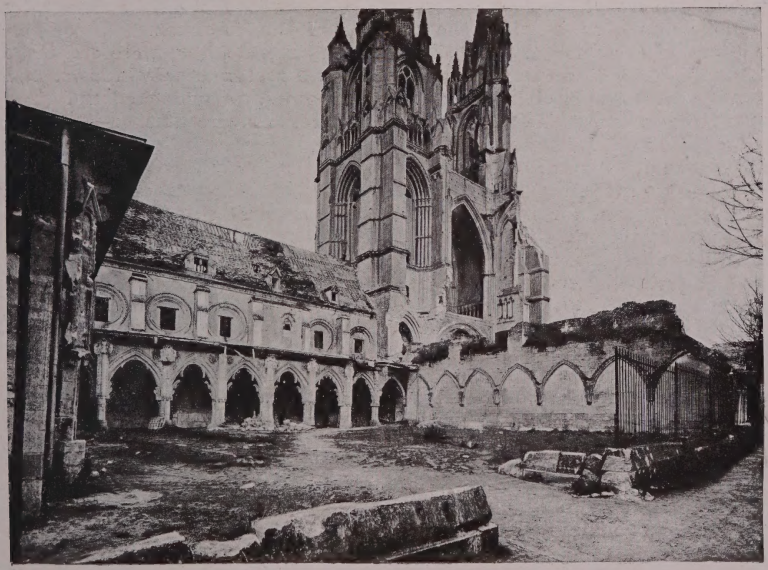


INTERIOR OF THE SOUTHERN GALLERY, NOV. 1918.

The cloister, especially the south end, was often struck by German shells, one piercing the vaulting of a bay, another damaging the carvings of the exterior buttresses.

The Refectory.

The refectory (*photo below*), erected at the end of the 13th century, was spoiled after the Revolution by its conversion to military uses.



REAR SIDE OF THE FAÇADE, CLOISTER AND REFECTORY, NOV. 1918.

WESTERN GALLERY OF THE CLOISTER AND THE REFECTORY.

The refectory, over 130 feet in length, contains two naves with pointed vaulting. The pointed arches rest on fine columns with foliate capitals, which are buttressed outside by piers engaged in the stonework. Like all monastery refectories, it has a raised and vaulted platform, from which one of the monks read aloud during meals.

The refectory, used as a store-house, is divided into two stories by a floor which runs below the capitals of the columns.

Outside the refectory, on the side next the cloister, were six large rose-windows, since transformed into small rectangular windows, and on the west front, eight tierce-point windows, now blocked up.

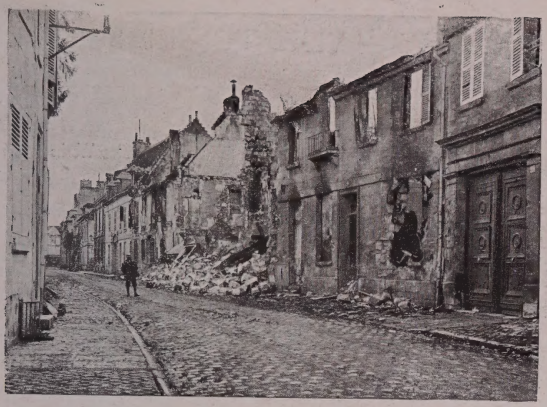
At the base of the loft-roof, set at intervals, are dormer-windows, whereof one Renaissance.

The roof, damaged in places, was completely destroyed by the bombardments over several of the bays. A large breach, already repaired, was made in the end bay on the east side. One buttress was destroyed and the adjacent part of the framework of one of the rose-windows broken (*photo above*).

The great cloister communicated on the east with a small cloister, rebuilt about 1550 in Renaissance style, of which several bays of the south gallery remain standing.

Lastly, on this side of the façade of the church, to the east, is a building, re-erected in the 16th century for the Abbot's residence, but which has been completely disfigured by its adaptation for military purposes. It is flanked by an octagonal turret containing a staircase.

On leaving the Abbey, take the Rue Saint-Jean on the right, as far as the Place Dauphine, in which is the **Sous-Préfecture**, housed in a mansion built at the beginning of the 19th century. It was struck by numerous shells



THE RUE DES MINIMES.

Take on the left the Rue de Panleu which runs alongside the buildings of the old **Grand Séminaire** (late 17th century), whose 18th century chapel is decorated with beautiful painted and gilded woodwork, greatly damaged.

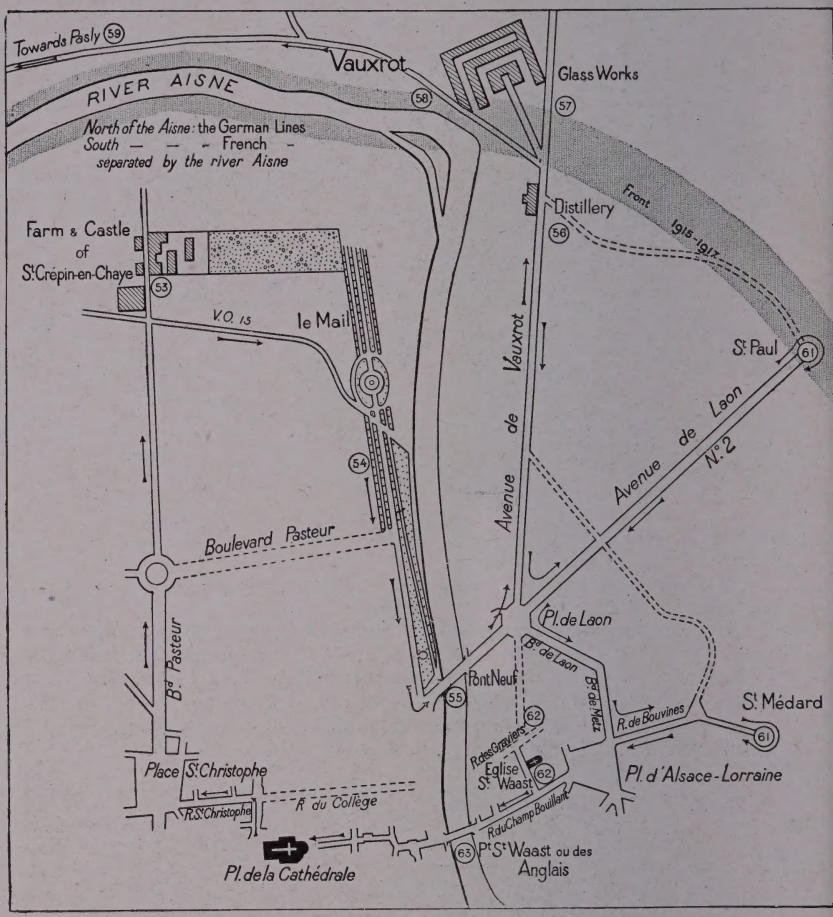
Many shells fell on the Grand Séminaire, causing serious damage. A great part of the roofing was destroyed and in places large openings were torn in the walls.

At the north-west end of the park of the Grand Séminaire, excavations made in the 19th century, now filled in, uncovered the remains of a Roman amphitheatre. These remains indicated a theatre of very large dimensions, measuring about 470 feet across its greatest width, while the theatre at Orange mesures little over 300 feet.

Return to the Cathedral via the Rue de la Buerie, a continuation of the Rue de Panleu. On the right is the Rue des Minimes with its burnt houses (*photo above*).

THE CATHEDRAL QUARTER IN 1917.
In the background: the Cathedral Tower still standing.

FIRST ITINERARY — VISIT TO THE SURROUNDINGS

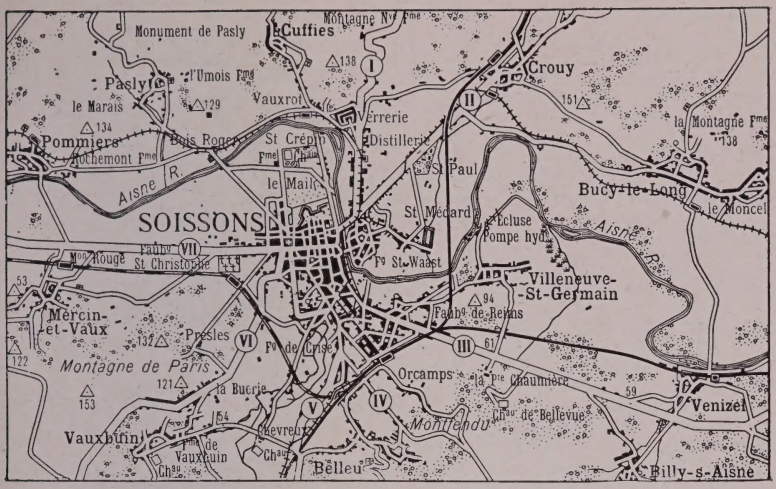


Starting-point : Place de la Cathédrale.

The following itinerary includes the defensive works of Saint-Crépin-en-Chaye and Le Mail, the first French and German lines from Pasly to Saint-Paul, and the bridge-head on the right bank of the Aisne, in front of the Faubourg Saint-Waast .

Starting from the **Cathedral,** follow the streets indicated by **continuous lines** in the direction of the arrows.

The **numbers** indicate the **pages** where the corresponding **photographs** wil be found.



Follow the Rue de la Buerie to the Rue Saint-Christophe, which take to the left as far as the place Saint-Christophe To the north of this square take the Boulevard Pasteur, follow its continuation (a narrow road) which leads direct to the **Château de Saint-Crépin-en-Chaye** *(see outline map, p. 52).*

Numerous defensive works surrounded this chateau and the farm belonging to it. These buildings, now entirely in ruins, occupied the site of an abbey founded in the 12th century.

CHATEAU OF ST-CRÉPIN-EN-CHAYE. *January* 1919.

On the left: ruins of farm and bomb-proof shelter; on the right: trench leading to the Château seen in the background through the trees.

THE MAIL BEFORE THE WAR *Cliché LL).*

After visiting Saint-Crépin, take the road (*V. O.* 15), *along which ran strong defence-works and which leads to the Promenade du Mail. Follow the promenade towards the town as far as Pont-Neuf.*

The Promenade du Mail, extending from the Hôtel-de-Ville to Vauxrot, contained a trench throughout its entire length which led to the front lines in the northern sector.

The Mail, bordered by the river Aisne and planted with century-old trees, dates from the 17th and 18th centuries, and before the War was one of the finest public gardens in France.

It was completely spoilt by formidable defence-works. A series of trenches, strengthened by defence-works of every kind and by strong points such as the Brasserie du Mail on the Bank of the Aisne, began in the middle of the Mail. They branched out at the end of the Promenade into a great number of outposts, blockhouses and observation posts, from which the naked eye could discern the entrenchments of the camouflaged German outposts on the right bank of the Aisne.

Communication with the Allies' bridge-head on both banks was ensured by foot-bridges, constantly under fire, and temporary ways over the two partially destroyed bridges.

THE MAIL DURING THE WAR.

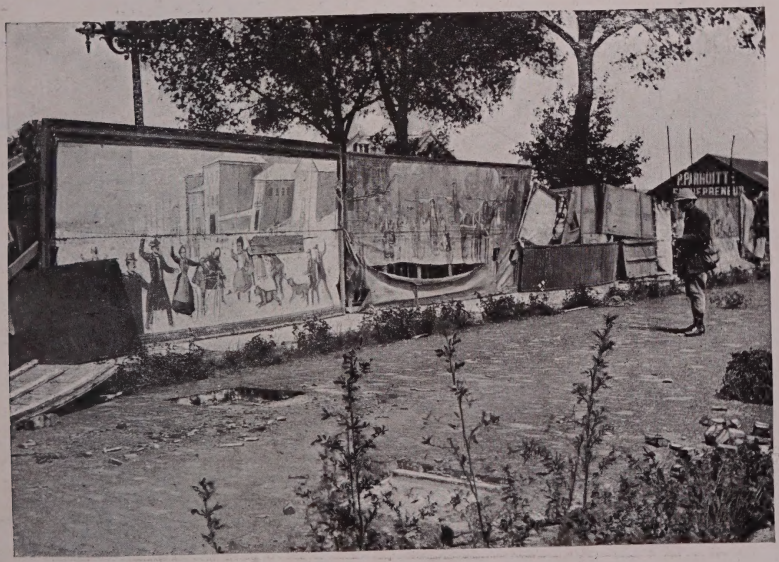
In the background : the band-stand near which General de Grandmaison was killed.

THE PONT-NEUF, BLOWN UP BY THE BRITISH.

Cross the Aisne at the **Pont-Neuf.**

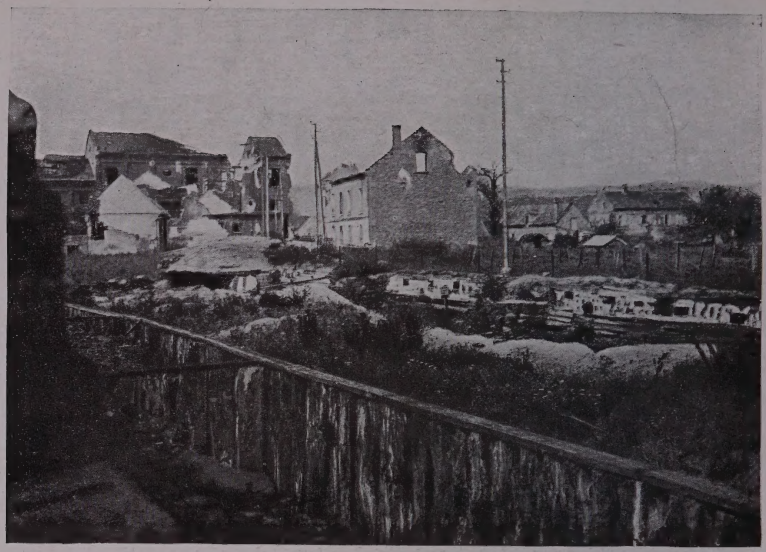
The Pont-Neuf or Pont-du-Mail, over which passes the National Road (N° 2) from Paris to Maubeuge, was built in 1903 of reinforced concrete.

On September 1, 1914, the British blew up the middle arch. It was subsequently found possible to contrive a crossing over the broken arch, hidden from the view of the enemy by the gaily coloured tents of a travelling show which happened to be in Soissons when war was declared (*photo below*).



THE PONT-NEUF CAMOUFLAGED.

THE DISTILLERY IN 1917.



The French First Line in the Distillery.

From the Pont-Neuf, take the Avenue de Laon to the Place de Laon, then take the Avenue de Vauxrot on the left to Vauxrot and Pasly. (*See map, p.* 53 *and Itinerary, p.* 52)

About half a mile from the Place de Laon are the ruins of a large **distillery** which formed the first French position and was strongly fortified.

On the north of the distillery, beyond "No man's land" with its barbed-wire entanglements, a very important **glass-works** formed the first German line. Before the war, these glass-works turned out se-

THE DISTILLERY IN 1918.

THE GLASS-WORKS AT VAUXROT. *In the foreground: A German grave.*

The German First Line in the Glass-Works.

veral millions of champagne bottles every year. *A heap of these bottles is visible in the photo below.*

Between the buildings of these works, now completely ruined by the incessant bombardments, are countless passages and trenches of reinforced concrete, observation posts, blockhouses, concrete machine-gun positions and deep dug-outs.

THE GLASS-WORKS OF VAUXROT. *In the background: Hill* 136.

THE BANKS OF THE AISNE.

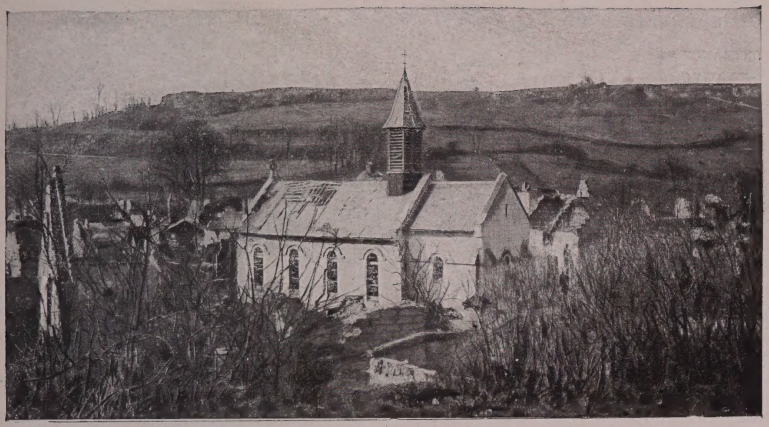
In the background: Chapel of the Glass-Works. To the left of the Chapel, a German Machine-Gun was posted below a crane.

From Vauxrot to Pasly, the lines were separated by the Aisne. On both banks of the river were outposts and advanced trenches with machine-guns (*photo below*).

From Vauxrot, proceed to Pasly (*see map, p.* 53).

From the church at Pasly there is an interesting walk to the caves seen in the photograph on p. 59 shutting in the horizon to the north of the village. *Follow the road for nearly half-a-mile, then turn to the right into the road which goes up the side of the hill and skirts the caves. The latter were fortified by the Germans, and afterwards inhabited by the population of Pasly.*

THE DAM AT VAUXROT. *A nest of Machine-Guns was posted near the pile.*



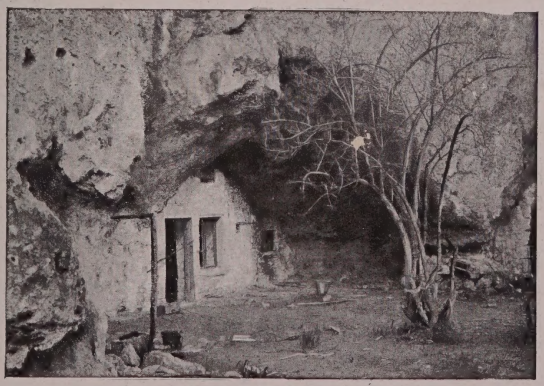
PASLY. *On the horizon Hill containing caves.*

A **monument** to the school-teachers shot by the Germans in 1870, was destroyed by the enemy in 1914 (*photo below*).

SCHOOL-TEACHERS' MONUMENT DESTROYED BY THE GERMANS AT PASLY. (*see above*)

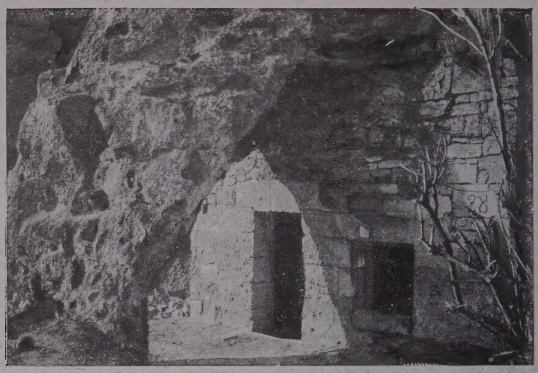
The road leads back to the village. Return via Vauxrot to the Place de Laon, then follow on the left the Avenue de Laon to Saint-Paul.

The defence-works visited between Pasly, the glass-works and the distillery, extended from there in an almost straight and formidable entrenched line to the National Road from Paris to Maubeuge (N. 2).



ORGANIZED CAVE AT PASLY

After crossing this road, about half-way between Soissons and Crouy, they encircle the **hamlet of St-Paul** on the north and east. This fortified hamlet formed



ENTRANCE TO CAVE AT PASLY.

the **Saint-Paul salient** and protected the faubourg of Saint-Waast.

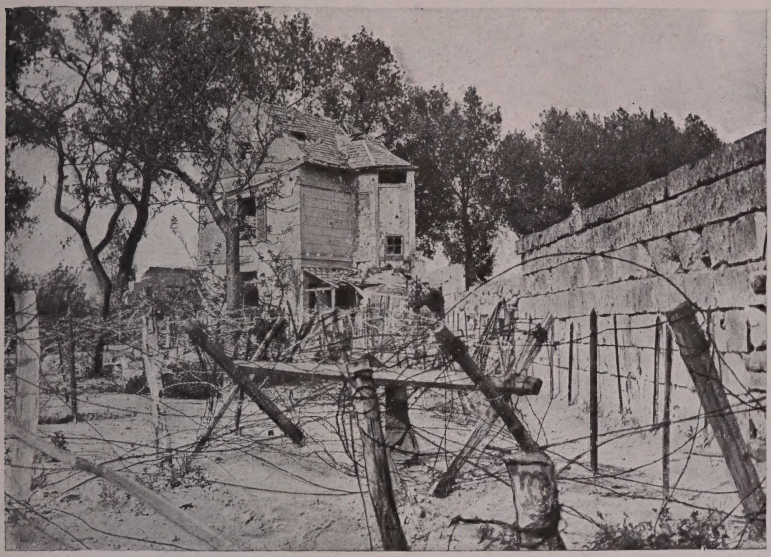
From Saint-Paul the trenches, sloping towards the south, extended in front of the strongly fortified Faubourg of Saint-Médard and rejoined the Aisne at the point where the river forms a great loop above Soissons. It was the eastern sector of the defences, covering alike the Faubourg of Saint-Waast and the bridge-head on the right bank.

To go from Saint-Paul to Saint-Médard, return to the Place de Laon. Take on the left the Boulevard de Laon, then the Boulevard de Metz which continues it, to the Place d'Alsace-Lorraine. Take the Rue de Bouvines on the left to the **Abbey of Saint-Médard.**

The Faubourg of Saint-Médard is as old as the town itself. In fact, it existed in the Roman era, and later became one of the favorite residences of the Merovingian Kings, who owned a large "villa" there.

DESTROYED BRIDGE OVER THE AISNE.

This bridge connected Pasly with Soissons.



IN THE ST-PAUL SALIENT

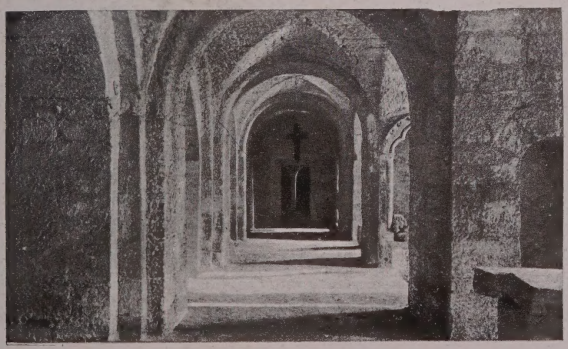
About 556, Clotaire I had the greatly revered Bishop of Noyon, Saint-Médard, buried in this villa, and erected over his grave a basilica, round which a monastery was built.

After playing an important part in the history of the early Middle-Ages, this monastery attracted 300 000 pilgrims as late as 1530. The buildings were devastated during the many sieges to which Soissons was subjected. Rebuilt in the 17th, they were converted in the 19th century into a school for deaf-mutes and the blind.

Of the ancient buildings, there remains only a **crypt**, one of the oldest in France and of great archæological interest.

Built in the 9th century and measuring about 80 feet in length, 8 feet in width and 13 feet in height, this crypt (*photo below*) includes a central gallery with groined vault, off which open chapels.

The vaulting rests on very thick walls, in which small niches have been hollowed out as seats for the pilgrims.



THE CRYPT OF ST-MÉDARD.

One of the oldest crypts in France.

CHURCH OF ST-WAAST IN 1917

Return to the Place d'Alsace-Lorraine, take the Rue du Champ-Bouillant as far as the first street on the right (Rue Messire-P.-Leroy) which leads to the **Church of Saint-Waast.**

The church of Saint-Waast, built in the 19th century, consists of a large central pile with aisles on each side of the nave. A graceful belfry, ending in a spire, rises over the portal. The interior of the building is not vaulted, but has a timber-work roof. The arches are

FAUBOURG ST-WAAST.

Defence-Works in the Rue des Graviers, near the Church (see Itinerary).

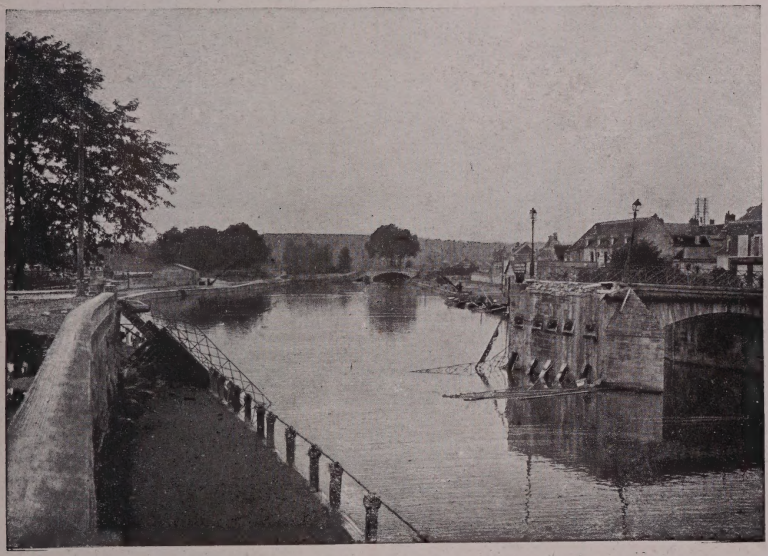
supported by square pillars and the walls ornamented with pictures.

The bombardments did great damage. Everywhere the roof was broken in and a large part completely destroyed. In the walls are numerous gaps, while the façade is pitted by shell splinters. The belfry, very badly damaged on the first story, had two of its sides in the upper story completely demolished. The spire fell down in 1918. The interior of the main building suffered less, but the timber-work roof was badly damaged.

The Faubourg Saint-Waast led to the first lines of the north-east sector of Soissons, which passed north of the hamlet of Saint-Paul.

Because of its situation, it had been put in a complete state of defence and was continually bombarded. The railway station, gas-works and most of the factories were destroyed. In places, it is nothing more than a heap of ruins with, here and there, vestiges of the old military works.

Return to the Rue du Champ-Bouillant, follow same as far as the Aisne, crossing the latter at the Pont Saint-Waast.



THE PONT ST-WAAST OR PONT DES ANGLAIS. *In the background, the Pont-Neuf, Sept.* 1914.

The pont Saint-Waast, also called the Pont-des-Anglais (since the war) dates from the Middle-Ages (*photo above*). Of the original structure there remain the arches on the Saint-Waast side (restored) The rest of the bridge consists of an iron platform which the Germans destroyed on September 13, 1914, when they evacuated the town.

Rebuilt by the British in 1914, together with a foot-bridge, it ensured communication between the centre of the town and the Faubourg Saint-Waast, in spite of incessant bombardments.

Return to the Cathedral by the Rue la Bannière, Rue de Montrevers, and Rue de l'Hôtel-Dieu.

CONTENTS

Chief Historical Facts 2
First German Occupation, 1914 4
Second German Occupation, 1918 7
The Bombardments 10
A Thirty-Months' Siege 11

VISIT TO THE CITY

The Cathedral ..... 15 - 31
St-Léger Church ..... 35 - 39
The Hôtel-de-Ville ..... 40 - 41
St-Pierre-au-Parvis Church 42
Maison de l'Arquebuse 43
St-Jean-des-Vignes Abbey ..... 44 - 50

VISIT TO THE SURROUNDINGS

St-Crépin-en-Chaye Château 53
Vauxrot-Pasly ..... 56 - 60
Saint-Paul — Saint-Médard ..... 60 - 61
Faubourg St-Waast ..... 62 - 63

STREET DEFENCE-WORKS IN THE FAUBOURG ST-WAAST.

VIII bis-2.112 bis-6.1920 IMP. KAPP, PARIS

'OFFICE NATIONAL DU TOURISME'

17, Rue de Surène, PARIS-8e

The 'Office National du Tourisme' was created by Act of Parliament on April 8th 1910, and reorganized in 1917. It enjoys civil privileges and financial autonomy.

It is directed by an Administrative Council chosen by the Minister of Public Works.

Its mission is to seek out every means of developing travel ; to urge, and if necessary to take any measure capable of ameliorating the conditions of the transport, circulation and sojourn of tourists.

It co-ordinates the efforts of touring societies and industries, encourages them in the execution of their programmes and stimulates legislative and administrative initiative with regard to the development of travel in France.

It promotes understanding between the Public Services, the great Transport Companies, the 'Syndicats d'Initiative' and the 'Syndicats Professionnels'.

It organises propaganda in foreign countries ; and tends towards the creation of Travel Inquiry Offices in France and abroad, with a view to making known the scenery and monuments of France, as well as the health-giving powers of French mineral waters, spas and bathing places.

ALL INQUIRIES WITH REGARD TO TRAVELLING
SHOULD BE ADDRESSED
TO THE 'TOURING-CLUB DE FRANCE'

65, Avenue de la Grande-Armée, 65
PARIS

THE ' TOURING-CLUB DE FRANCE '

WHAT IS IT ? WHAT ARE ITS USES ?

The ' Touring-Club de France ' (founded in 1890), is at the present time the largest Touring Association in the whole world. Its principal aim is to introduce France — admirable country and one of the loveliest on earth — to French people themselves and to foreigners.

It seeks to develop travel in all its forms : on foot, on horseback, on bicycle, in carriage, motor, yacht or railway, and soon in aeroplane.

Every member of the Association receives a badge and an identity ticket free of charge, as also the ' Revue Mensuelle ' every month.

Members have also the benefit of special prices in a certain number of affiliated hotels ; and this holds good for the purchase of guide-books and Staff (Etat-major) maps, as well as those of the ' Ministère de l'Intérieur ', the T. C. F., etc. They may insert notices regarding the sale or purchase of travelling requisites, in the ' Revue ' (1 fr. per line). The ' Comité des Contentieux ' is ready to give them counsel with regard to travelling, and 3.000 delegates in all the principal towns are able to give them advice and information about the curiosities of art or of nature in the neighbourhood, as well as concerning the roads, hotels, motor-agents, garages, etc.

Members are accorded free passage across the frontier for a bicycle or motor-bicycle. For a motor-car the Association gives a ' Triptyque ' ensuring free passage through the ' douane ', etc.

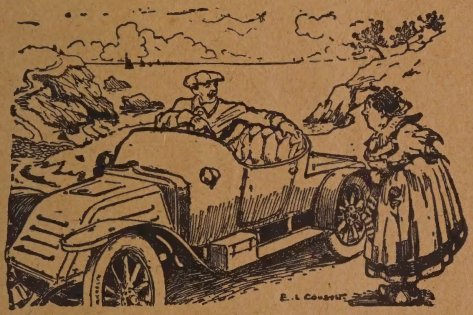
ONE TRAVELS BEST IN FRANCE WHEN A MEMBER

OF THE ' TOURING-CLUB DE FRANCE

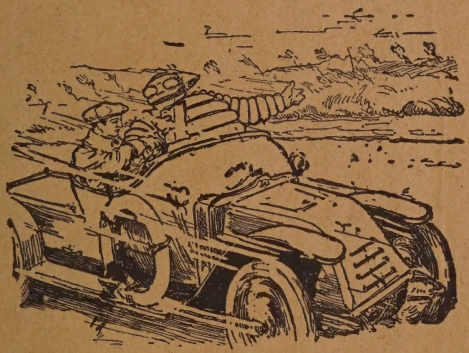
MICHELIN TOURING OFFICES

MICHELIN TYRE Co., Ltd., LONDON
Touring Office :: 81, Fulham Road, S. W.

MICHELIN & Cie, CLERMONT-FERRAND
Touring Office :: 97, Bd. Péreire, PARIS



Why ask the Way, when.....



.....Michelin will tell you free of charge ?

Drop a line, ring us up, or call at one of our Touring Offices and you will receive a carefully worked out description of the route to follow.

GETTY RESEARCH INSTITUTE
3 3125 01845 3916